

THE CALM START GUIDE TO NON- TOXIC LIVING FOR KIDS



SIMPLE SWAPS. SAFER HOMES.
HEALTHIER CHILDHOODS.

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ABOUT ME



Hi, I'm Dr. Amy—thanks for being here!

Happy Kid Functional Medicine was created for families who are doing their best but still seeing their kids struggle with things like focus, digestion, sleep, skin concerns, immune issues, or behavior that feels “off.”

Functional medicine looks deeper and asks: What's driving these challenges, and what does this child need to truly thrive?

At Happy Kid Functional Medicine, we offer:

- Support that finds the real source of symptoms
- Gentle, age-appropriate detox and care
- Simple strategies that fit real family life
- Education that builds confidence, not fear

Let's dive in!



HappyKidFunctionalMedicine.com



This toxic product swap guide was created to give you clarity without overwhelm and confidence without guilt. You don't need to do everything. You just need the right information to make informed choices one step at a time.

YOU are your child's best advocate. We're here to help you feel supported along the way.

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SECTION 1: BEFORE YOU BEGIN



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

If you're reading this, it means you care deeply about your child's health and that already matters more than doing everything "perfectly."

This guide is not about fear, guilt, or throwing out everything you own. It's about small, thoughtful changes that fit into real family life. You do not need to swap everything at once. You don't need an "all organic" home. And you certainly don't need to do this overnight.



Non-toxic living works best when it's slow, steady, and sustainable. Replacing one product at a time often simply when something runs out can meaningfully reduce your child's overall exposure without adding stress or financial strain.

You're allowed to move at your own pace. You're allowed to choose what feels doable. Progress, not perfection, is the goal.



Why Kids Are More Sensitive to Everyday Exposures

Children's bodies are constantly growing and developing, which makes them more responsive both positively and negatively to their environment.

Compared to adults, kids:

- Eat, drink, and breathe more per pound of body weight
- Have developing liver and gut detox pathways
- Spend more time on the floor and put hands and objects in their mouths
- Are in critical windows of brain, immune, and hormone development





Because of this, everyday exposures from personal care products, fragrances, plastics, and cleaning supplies can have a greater impact during childhood than later in life.

This doesn't mean families need to eliminate every exposure. It means that reducing what's unnecessary, especially in high-contact areas, is a supportive and proactive step.

The goal of this guide is to help you focus on what matters most so you can make informed choices that support your child's developing body without overwhelm.

SECTION 2: THE “BIG 7” SWAPS



The “Big 7” Swap Categories (Highest Impact First)

These areas offer the greatest exposure reduction with the least effort.



1) Personal Care (Daily Skin Contact)

Start with:

- Body wash, shampoos, lotions

Brands we know and trust :

California Baby

Yobe

Earthley

Poofy Organics

EarthMama Organics

Rowe Casa Organics

Holy Cow Organix

Primally Pure



2) Toothpaste

Brands we know and trust

Just Ingredients

Boka

Jack and Jill

Spry Kids

Tom's of Maine

Risewell

Radius Kids

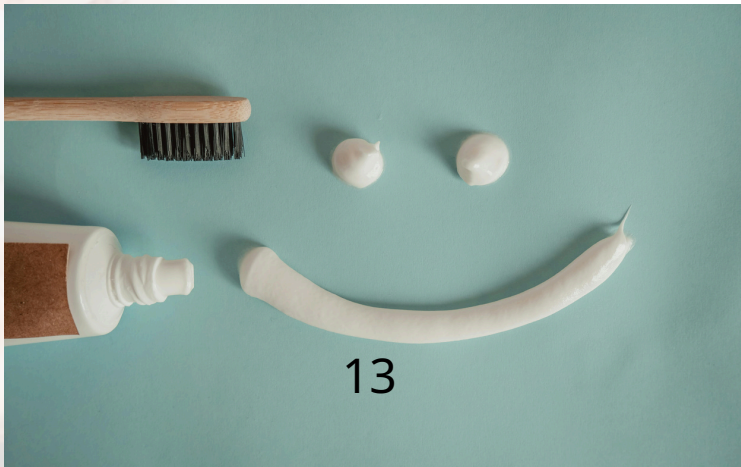


Why this matters for kids:

Children absorb chemicals more easily through the skin than adults. Many conventional products contain fragrance, preservatives, and endocrine-disrupting ingredients that kids are exposed to daily.

Keep it simple:

One body wash + one lotion is enough to start. Choose fragrance-free or lightly scented with essential oils.



3) Filter Filter Filter

Bath & Shower Filters (Whole-Home or Point-of-Use)

Bath and shower water can contain chlorine, chloramines, VOCs, and trace metals, which are absorbed through the skin and inhaled as steam, especially in warm water. Children are more vulnerable due to thinner skin and developing systems.

Using bath and shower filters helps:

- Reduce chlorine and chemical exposure
- Support healthier skin and fewer eczema flares
- Make bathing gentler for sensitive or sensory-sensitive kids

Why this matters: baths and showers can be a larger exposure source than drinking water, so filtering here meaningfully lowers daily toxic load.



Drinking Water Filters (RO, Alkaline, Pitchers & More)

For drinking water, the goal is removing contaminants before ingestion.

Common options:

- Reverse osmosis (RO): Highly effective at removing heavy metals, PFAS, nitrates, and many chemicals. Often paired with remineralization or alkaline filters to add back minerals for taste and balance.
- Purification pitchers: Convenient and affordable; reduce chlorine and some metals, but less effective for PFAS and dissolved solids.
- Countertop or under-sink filters: A middle ground better filtration than pitchers without full RO.

Key takeaway:

RO systems offer the deepest purification for drinking water, while pitchers and under-sink systems provide practical improvement when RO isn't feasible.



What's commonly in tap water?

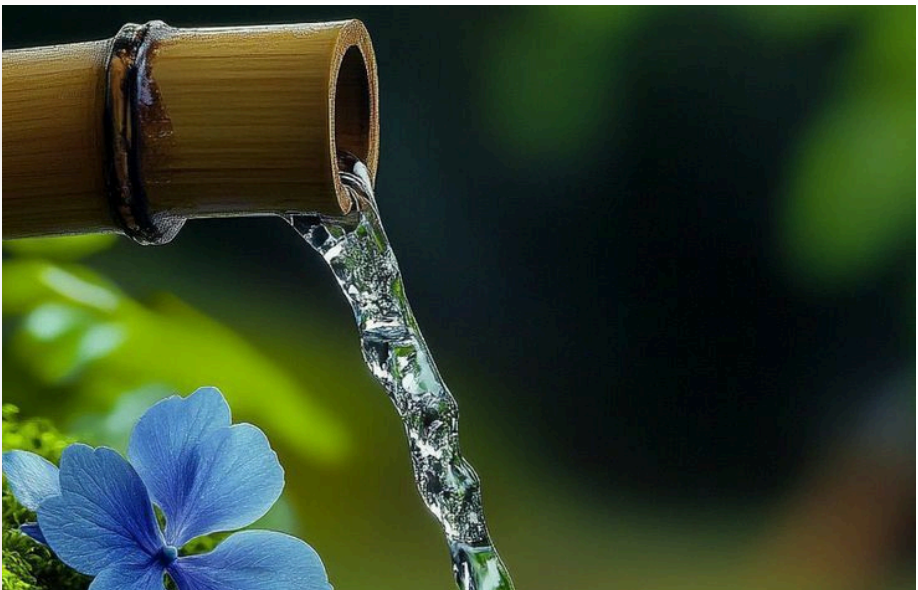
1)**Chlorine**- Dry out skin, irritate airways, disrupt the skin barrier

2)**Heavy Metals**- Kids absorb metals more readily, and even low-level exposure matters for developing brains and nervous systems.

3)**Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)**- These vaporize in hot water, meaning kids breathe them in during baths and showers.

4)**Pesticides and herbicide residues**- Low-dose, chronic exposure is the concern not acute poisoning.

5)**PFAs (“forever chemicals”)**- Linked to immune, hormonal, and developmental effects



Do these really get absorbed through the skin?

Yes. The skin is not a sealed barrier, especially in kids.

- Children's skin is thinner
- Warm water increases permeability
- Damaged skin (eczema, diaper rash, cuts) absorbs more

Studies show chlorine and some VOCs are absorbed faster through skin during bathing than from drinking water.

Why kids are more affected than adults

- Smaller bodies = higher dose per pound
- Developing detox systems
- Rapid brain and immune development
- Longer lifetime exposure window

This is why reducing avoidable exposure matters more than achieving perfection.



What a bath/shower filter actually does

A good filter can:

- Reduce chlorine & chloramines
- Reduce some heavy metals
- Reduce VOCs
- Improve skin hydration and comfort

Parents often notice:

- Less eczema flares
- Less itchy, dry skin
- Less strong “pool smell”
- Happier bath time (especially for sensory-sensitive kids)

Brands we know and trust:

Bath & Shower Filters

Crystal Quest Bath Filter

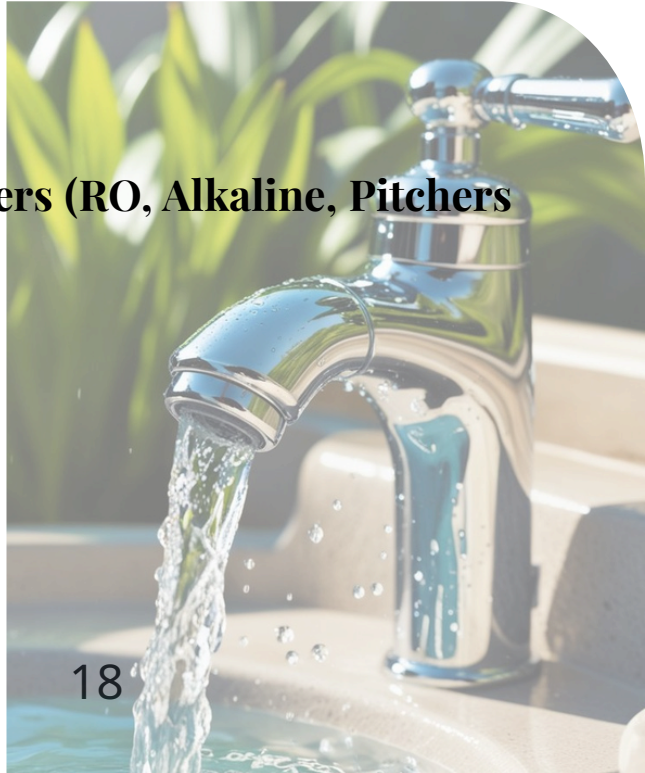
Aqua Bliss

Kitsch

Drinking Water Filters (RO, Alkaline, Pitchers & More)

AquaTru

Berkey



4) Laundry Products (All-Day Exposure)

Start with:

- Laundry detergent, Fabric softeners, dryer sheets (often the biggest offenders)

Brands we know and trust

Earthley

Mama Suds

Molly Suds

Branch Basics

Poofy Organics

Zuma

Rowe Casa Organics



Why this matters for kids:

Laundry residue stays in pajamas, underwear, towels, and sheets creating constant skin exposure, especially for kids with eczema, allergies, or sensory sensitivities.

Keep it simple:

Use one clean detergent for the whole family. Skip dryer sheets and scent boosters entirely.

5) Food & Drink Contact

Water bottles:

- stainless steel or borosilicate glass are best

Brands we know and trust:

Owala

Klean Kanteen

Hydro Flask

Simple Modern

Pura

Life Factory

Sigg



Plates and dishes (kids)

Brands we know and trust

Elk and Friends

Ahimsa



Plates and dishes (family)

Look for lead and cadmium free. Often these will not have a color to the plate as a clue

Food storage containers

Look for glass, ceramic or stainless steel as healthy options for storage.

Why this matters for kids:

Children eat and drink more per pound of body weight than adults. Heat increases chemical leaching into food and beverages.

Keep it simple:

Prioritize school water bottles first. Replace plastics as they crack, cloud, or warp.



6) Home Cleaning Products (Air + Surface Exposure)

Start with:

- All-purpose cleaner, Dish soap, Floor cleaner (especially for crawlers)

Brands we know and trust

Earthley

Branch Basics

Poofy Organics

Mama Suds

Rowe Casa Organics

Zuma

Blueland (Costco)



Why this matters for kids:

Kids crawl, play on the floor, and put hands in their mouths. Cleaning products affect both surface contact and indoor air quality.

Keep it simple:

One multi-purpose cleaner can replace several products.

7) Air & Fragrance

Start with:

- Candles, Plug-ins, Sprays and scent boosters

Brands we know and trust

Azuna

Soli Deo Gloria Candle

Fontana Candle Co

Stone & Spear

Rowe Casa Organics

Poofy Organics

Pure Haven

Why this matters for kids:

Synthetic fragrance is one of the most common sources of endocrine disruptors and can trigger headaches, behavior changes, and respiratory symptoms in children.

Keep it simple:

If a product makes a room smell “strong,” skip it. Fresh air fragrance.

SECTION 3: “WHEN IT RUNS OUT” RULE



“When It Runs Out” Rule

One of the biggest misconceptions about non-toxic living is that you have to throw everything away and start over.

That’s not only stressful—it’s unnecessary.

The “When It Runs Out” rule is a simple, sustainable way to reduce exposure without wasting money, creating guilt, or overwhelming your household.

Here’s how it works: When a product is finished, that’s your cue to choose a cleaner alternative next time. Until then, you can keep using what you already have.

This approach allows families to:

- Make changes gradually and intentionally
- Avoid unnecessary waste
- Stay within budget
- Build habits that actually last

Instead of focusing on what still needs to change, this method helps you notice how much you’re already doing.

Non-toxic living takes time, not urgency.

Swap products at a gentle pace. Each small change lowers your child's exposure and keeps daily life steady. Over weeks and months, these choices build a healthier home.

And if you're unsure where to go next, just replace whatever runs out first.



You don't need to toss anything today. Using up what you already own is responsible, realistic, and allowed.

Progress happens one swap at a time!



SECTION 4: INGREDIENTS TO AVOID



Ingredients to Avoid First

A Simple Cheat Sheet for Families Starting Non-Toxic Living

You don't need to memorize long chemical names. Start with these common red flags.

FRAGRANCE (Top Priority)

- Listed as: fragrance, parfum, aroma

Why it matters: “Fragrance” is a catch-all term that can hide dozens of undisclosed chemicals, including endocrine disruptors.

Commonly found in: Personal care, Laundry detergent & dryer sheets, Candles & air fresheners Cleaning products

First swap recommendation: Choose fragrance-free (not “unscented,” which can still contain



PHTHALATES

- Often hidden under: fragrance, DEP, DBP, DEHP

Why it matters: Linked to hormone disruption and developmental concerns, especially in children.

Commonly found in: Lotions & soaps, Hair products, Soft plastics & vinyl, Air fresheners

FORMALDEHYDE & FORMALDEHYDE-RELEASERS

- Watch for names like: DMDM hydantoin, quaternium-15, imidazolidinyl urea

Why it matters: Formaldehyde is a known irritant and carcinogen.

Commonly found in: Shampoos & body washes, Laundry detergents, Cleaning products

SYNTHETIC DYES

- Often listed as: FD&C colors, Blue 1, Red 40, Yellow 5

Why it matters: Linked to behavioral sensitivity in some children.

Commonly found in: Toothpaste, Soaps & bubble baths, Medications & supplements





TRICLOSAN & ANTIBACTERIAL AGENTS

Why it matters: Can disrupt hormones and contribute to antibiotic resistance.

Commonly found in: “Antibacterial” soaps, Toothpaste, Cleaning products
Soap and water are enough for everyday use.

PARABENS

- Look for: methylparaben, propyl paraben, butylparaben

Why it matters: Parabens can mimic estrogen and disrupt hormones.

Commonly found in: Lotions, creams, cosmetics, personal care products

VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS (VOCs)

- Not always listed by name

Why it matters: VOCs contribute to indoor air pollution and respiratory irritation.

Commonly released from: sprays and aerosols, new mattresses and furniture, candles and plug ins

What to Look For Instead

Fragrance-free

Simple ingredient lists

Third-party certifications (when possible)

Products designed for babies or sensitive skin

Remember

You don't need to avoid everything at once. Start with fragrance, laundry, and daily-use products.

Each swap reduces your child's overall exposure—and that matters.



SECTION 5: KID SPECIFIC PRIORITIES



Kid-Specific Priorities

Why These Swaps Matter More for Children

Parents often ask, “Does this really make a difference for my child?” The answer is yes not because children are fragile, but because their bodies are still learning how to grow, adapt, and protect themselves.

Children Process the World Differently

Compared to adults, children:

- Have developing detox systems in the liver and gut that are still maturing
- Experience higher exposure per body weight, meaning small amounts go further
- Explore through hand-to-mouth behavior, increasing ingestion of residues
- Move through sensitive hormonal and neurological windows that shape long-term health

These factors make everyday exposures more impactful during childhood especially when they're repeated day after day.

Reducing Exposure Can Support a Child's Health

Lowering unnecessary chemical exposure doesn't treat symptoms but it creates a healthier foundation for the body to function as it's meant to.

Parents often notice benefits in areas like:

- Focus & behavior Fewer synthetic dyes, fragrances, and irritants can reduce background stress on the nervous system.

- Skin health Gentle, fragrance-free products support the skin barrier and may help calm eczema, rashes, or sensitivity.

- Immune resilience Reducing environmental stressors allows the immune system to focus on growth and protection.

Sleep quality Cleaner air, bedding, and personal care products can support deeper, more restorative sleep.

A Gentle Perspective

These swaps aren't about fixing your child—they're about supporting their developing systems during a critical time of growth.

You don't need to eliminate every exposure. You don't need to do everything at once.

By reducing what's unnecessary, you're giving your child's body more room to do what it already knows how to do.

SECTION 6: BUDGET FRIENDLY GUIDANCE



Budget Friendly Guidance

Clean Living Without the Pressure

Non-toxic living is often portrayed as expensive or all-or-nothing but it doesn't have to be either.

Many safer swaps are affordable, widely available, and easy to find at stores families already shop at. The most important factor isn't buying the "perfect" product it's reducing the highest-impact exposures first.

Ways to Keep This Realistic

- Big-box friendly swaps Many fragrance-free and low-tox options are available at large retailers and online marketplaces. You don't need specialty boutiques to get started.
- DIY when it make sense. Simple ingredients like vinegar, baking soda, and unscented soap can cover many cleaning needs without added cost.
- One swap at a time Replacing products as they run out spreads out expenses and makes change sustainable.
- Focus on use, not price. A lower- cost product used daily often matters more than an expensive upgrade used occasionally.

Clean living isn't about spending more it's about choosing where your effort counts most.

SECTION 7: WHAT NOT TO STRES ABOUT



What Not to Stress About (Yet)

When families learn about toxic exposures, it's easy to feel like everything suddenly needs to change. This guide is here to do the opposite to help you focus and let go of unnecessary pressure.

You do not need to:

- Replace all furniture immediately
- Make every item in your home organic
- Eliminate all exposures overnight
- Panic about occasional exposures outside your home

Life happens. Kids attend school, visit friends, and live in the real world and that's okay.

The goal of non-toxic living is reduction, not elimination.

By lowering what's unnecessary inside your home, you're already creating a healthier baseline for your child.

Consistency matters far more than perfection.



SECTION 8: SIMPLE 1ST WEEK PLAN



A Simple First-Week Action Plan

If you're ready to begin, start small. This simple plan helps you take action without overwhelm.

Your First Week of Swaps

Day 1: Swap laundry detergent or remove dryer sheets

Day 2: Remove plug-in air fresheners, sprays, or scented candles

Day 3: Replace toothpaste with a cleaner option

Day 4-7: Choose one kitchen item to swap – Water bottles – Food storage containers – Stop heating food in plastic

That's it.

You don't need to do more this week. These small steps already reduce a meaningful portion of daily exposure—and they create momentum for the next change when you're ready.

You're not behind. You're not late. You're starting—and that's enough.



SECTION 9: WHEN TO GET EXTRA SUPPORT



Gentle Guidance on When to Get Extra Support

For many families, product swaps alone make a noticeable difference and that's wonderful. But some children need a little more support, especially when symptoms are persistent or seem out of proportion to everyday life.

At Happy Kid Functional Medicine, we often see children whose bodies are working harder than expected to adapt to their environment. This doesn't mean anything is "wrong" with your child it simply means their systems may need more personalized guidance.

Additional support can be helpful for children who experience:

- Eczema or ongoing skin flare-ups
- Asthma or frequent respiratory symptoms
- ADHD, focus challenges, or behavioral dysregulation
- Chronic congestion or recurrent ear infections
- Sensory sensitivities or strong reactions to smells, foods, or textures
- Frequent infections or slow recovery

These patterns can be signs that a child's immune, detox, or nervous systems are under extra stress.

Functional medicine looks at the whole child their environment, nutrition, gut health, genetics, and development to understand why symptoms are happening and how to support the body safely and appropriately for their age.

It's also important to know this: Needing extra support is not a failure of parenting. Some kids simply benefit from a more individualized approach and that's okay.

A Gentle Next Step

If you're wondering whether your child might benefit from additional guidance, we created a simple resource to help families reflect on patterns they're seeing at home.

“Is Your Child Sensitive to Toxins?” A short, parent-friendly checklist designed to help you decide whether general swaps are enough or if personalized support may be helpful.

There's no pressure and no obligation just clarity, education, and support.

You're doing the right thing by paying attention. And you don't have to figure this out alone.



SECTION 10: BONUS CHECKLIST





Bonus: First Non-Toxic Swap for Kids Handout

A simple place to begin—no perfection required.

Personal Care (Daily Skin Contact)

- Shampoo & body wash
- Lotion or moisturizer
- Toothpaste (kid-safe)
- Deodorant (if applicable)

Laundry (All-Day Exposure)

- Laundry detergent
- Remove dryer sheets or fabric softeners
- Choose fragrance-free when possible

Food & Drink Contact

- Replace plastic water bottles
- Swap food storage containers (glass or stainless)
- Avoid heating food in plastic

Home Cleaning

- All-purpose cleaner
- Dish soap
- Floor cleaner (especially for crawlers)

Air & Fragrance

- Remove plug-in air fresheners
- Avoid scented candles or sprays
- Open windows when possible

EXTRA PRIORITY FOR BABIES & TODDLERS

- Mattress or crib mattress materials
- Pajamas & bedding (organic when possible)
- Bath toys (check for mold)

REMEMBER

- ✓ You don't need to swap everything at once
- ✓ Replace items as they run out
- ✓ Reducing exposure matters—even if it's not perfect