

Children are constantly growing and developing, and generally speaking, have very little control over their environment. For these reasons, children are at a much greater risk for developing health problems due to exposure to environmental and dietary triggers than are adults. The following tables list some of the most common environmental and dietary triggers for children and offer suggestions on how to avoid or limit exposure to these triggers.

Environmental Triggers

Environmental Triggers to Avoid	Prevention Tips
Chlorine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use water filters Limit time in chlorinated pools and hot tubs
Dry cleaning agents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use natural, biodegradable and perfume free detergents and cleaning agents
Flame-retardant materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear 100% cotton clothes Use organic bedding
Fluoride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use fluoride-free toothpaste (xylitol toothpaste)
Aluminum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use stainless steel, ceramic, glass, or cast iron cookware Avoid using aluminum foil and food products packaged in aluminum cans Avoid non-stick cookware Use aluminum-free baking powder and deodorant
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use an air purifier, especially in the bedroom Avoid prolonged exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) Avoid plastic furniture or flooring (polyvinyl chloride) Avoid using herbicides and pesticides on lawns, gardens, home, or on pets Make sure your personal care products and cosmetics contain no parabens, fragrances, synthetic colors, phthalates, sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), sodium laureth sulfate (SLES), formaldehyde, triclosan, toluene, propylene glycol, benzophenone, PABA, or other chemicals. (Consult the Environmental Working Group (EWG)'s Skin Deep Database for more information.) Avoid highly allergenic substances (e.g., pollution, cigarette smoke, dust mites, etc.)

Dietary Triggers

Dietary Triggers to Avoid	Prevention Tips
Hydrogenated, trans, and esterified fats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use healthy fats and oils (e.g., avocado, coconut, olive, etc.) for cooking Make sure to use specific fats and oils for their intended purpose (that is, do not do any high-heat cooking with oils that have low smoke points) For more information, see A Guide to Cooking with Fats and Oils in IFM's member toolkit
Hormones and antibiotics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buy organic, pasture-raised, free-range meats and eggs Avoid meats from animals raised at concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs)
Mercury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid high-mercury fish and seafood (e.g., king mackerel, marlin, orange roughy, swordfish, tilefish, tuna)

Dietary Triggers (cont.)

Dietary Triggers to Avoid	Prevention Tips
Sugar and refined starches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Replace sugar and refined starches with whole grains■ Limit processed and preserved foods
Allergenic foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Eliminate allergenic foods and rotate foods to which you or your child is sensitive■ Consult your family physician or dietician about an elimination diet and food reintroduction protocol
Excitotoxins	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Avoid caffeine, monosodium glutamate (MSG), artificial sweeteners, food dyes, nitrites, sulfites, glutamates, and propionates
Plastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Do not microwave food in plastic or Styrofoam containers■ Do not store food in plastic or foil■ Avoid plastic water bottles
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Drink plenty of filtered water■ Add fermented foods (e.g., kombucha, coconut kefir, sauerkraut, etc.) to the diet■ Maximize intake of antioxidants, phytonutrients, and flavonoids. For more information, see the Phytonutrient Spectrum resources in IFM's member toolkit■ Limit intake of phenolics (e.g., apples, grapes, strawberries, etc.)