how to replace the obvious (and hidden) pesticides in your home

a free guide from Sustainable Baby Steps
the dangers of pesticides

It's more important than ever to make clear the dangers of pesticides, especially with approximately 59% of homes still using pesticides on a regular basis. As the following studies will show, even a slight exposure to pesticides can have deadly affects on our health and most especially the health of children, whose nervous systems are still developing.

The real problem is that pesticides are everywhere. Even if we don't use them in our home we are still exposed to them through non-organic foods, public parks, the routine spraying of businesses, even our doctors' offices! Why? Because we've been convinced of their safety and of the dangers of insects by the very people profiting from the propaganda.

an unwarranted bug-phobia

Our culture has a very unnecessary view of insects and bugs in general. If you ask anyone they will likely say it's because bugs are dangerous or harbor disease. But in most cases, the dangers of pesticides far outweigh the dangers of insects.

For starters, of all the common household insects very few actually pose a real threat: most commonly the black widow spider and brown recluse spider. However, because spiders do not clean themselves to digest the poison, they rarely respond to pesticides. Therefore preventative measures and common sanitation practices are far more effective against poisonous spiders than pesticides.

As for disease-carrying insects, the instances of disease caused by insects is very low, only seven insects out of a total of approximately 900,000 insects on Earth\(^1\). But as you're about to see, the dangers of pesticides are much higher and we're trading our health for a false sense of security.

There is also the idea that without pesticides modern farming would not be possible. However, nature has already proven this idea to be false. Through the use of organic gardening practices, insect invasion can be avoided with little to no impact on our food supply.
the dangers of pesticides

Countless studies have been done on the dangers of pesticides. I could easily fill page after page with the data collected against its common use.

Please don't view the following information as a death sentence. If you limit your exposure now and take action toward sustainable care of your health, as well as oppose pesticide use whenever possible, you can stop and even reverse the dangers of pesticides in your body.

cancer and tumors linked to pesticides

A 2005 study\(^2\) showed a link between breast cancer and a pesticide called heptachlor epoxide. This pesticide was commercially banned in 1988 but is still being used to control fire ants. Heptachlor epoxide is also connected to liver and kidney disease and cancers, convulsions, infertility, and fetal development\(^3\).

A report published in 2000 by the American Cancer Society, shows children are three to seven times more likely to develop non-Hodgkin lymphoma when exposed to household pesticides than children who are not exposed\(^4\).

One report showed an increased risk of childhood leukemia in households that used pesticides. The risk increased when the pesticide use increased. (This study also showed an increased risk in association with other toxins,)\(^5\) Another study stated, "Indoor use of some insecticides by the owners and pesticide use in the garden and on interior plants, in particular frequent prenatal use, was associated with increased risks up to severalfold in magnitude." \(^6\)

One German study linked leukemia and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in childhood to the use of professional and home pesticides.

Insecticides used occupationally have been classified as carcinogens by the International Agency for Research on Cancer.\(^7\) Organochlorine insecticides with Soft Tissue Sarcoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and leukemia.\(^8\)
According to an Oxford study, "use of chlorinated pesticides among applicators over 50 years of age and methyl bromide use were significantly associated with prostate cancer risk."\(^9\)

A University of California at Davis study shows household pesticide use during the prenatal period or early postnatal period was linked to autism.\(^10\)

**infertility, miscarriage and birth defects**

A 1998 study has linked the dangers of pesticides and other toxicants to subfecundity, infertility, pregnancy loss, growth retardation, intrauterine fetal demise, birth defect, and ovarian failure.\(^11\)

Twenty-one largely banned persistent and bioaccumulative pesticides were found in the cord blood of newborn babies. (266 other chemicals were also found.) \(^12\)

Numerous forms of the pesticide chlordane can be found in breast milk, along with many other contaminants.\(^13\) (This is NOT a reason to stop breastfeeding! Breast milk is still, by far, the best choice.)

Pesticide usage has also been linked to fetal death, malformations, miscarriages, long term infertility, male infertility, and brain damage during pregnancy.\(^14\)

**ADHD linked to pesticides**

One article showed a connection between organophosphate exposure, at levels common among US children, and ADHD prevalence.\(^15\)

From the University of Mississippi, a study shows a link between hyperactivity and pesticides and other chemicals by affecting the central nervous system.\(^16\) Similar results were found in relation to the pesticide chlorodane.\(^17\)

One study showed that ADHD may be caused by damage to neurotransmitters in the frontal lobe of the brain, with evidence showing that pesticides cause damage to brain cells.\(^18\) Because insecticides
kill insects by attacking their brains and nervous systems, it stands to reason it would affect the development of children's' brains.\(^{19}\)

**other diseases showing the dangers of pesticides**

A University of Wisconsin, Madison study showed pesticide seeped into groundwater and mixed with agricultural fertilizers is linked to immune and endocrine systems as well as neurological health.\(^{20}\)

One research report states "suggest that both acute high-intensity and cumulative pesticide exposure may contribute to depression in pesticide applicators."\(^{21}\)

The cause of Parkinson's disease (PD) is unknown, but epidemiological studies suggest an association with the dangers of pesticides and other environmental toxins.\(^{22}\)

**pesticides affecting the environment**

The dangers of pesticides on the natural world are largely untested. Since Rachel Carson's book, Silent Spring, it's been a concern but very little has done since the widespread grassroots efforts as a part of her research. Below are just a few studies that show us there may be dangers of pesticides we have yet to understand.

- Probabilistic risk-assessment model for birds exposed to granular pesticides
- Bird populations as sentinels of endocrine disrupting chemicals
- Scared sick? Effects of sublethal exposure to predators and pesticides on life history traits and disease susceptibility in wood frogs
- Effects of agricultural landscape and pesticides on parasitism in native bullfrogs
- Distribution of Endocrine-Disrupting Pesticides in Water and Fish from the Oder River, Poland
- PCBs and Organochlorine Pesticides in Ducks of Fereydoon-kenar Wildlife Refuge in Iran
- An integrated laboratory and field approach for assessing hazards of pesticide exposure to wildlife.

Is it any wonder we're all sick? The dangers of pesticides are a very real and very scary thing.

**safe, non-toxic, and organic pesticides and natural pest control**

Organic pesticides and natural pest control are among the first priorities in making sustainable choices. It can seem daunting but it's really rather simple.

Our household has been free of chemical pesticides since 2006. Coincidentally, that was also the last time any of us faced a serious illness, such as the flu or a cold.

Sadly, this connection is something often overlooked. We have campaigns to cure diseases, but too few of us stop to ask what it is causes them in the first place. Sufficient evidence exists to tell us the answer; we just need to accept it's true.

_Humankind has not woven the web of life._

_We are but one thread within it._

_Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves._

_All things are bound together. All things connect._

_-Chief Seattle, 1855_
the dangers of chemical pesticides

Do I really need to tell you why you shouldn't be using pesticides? How are these for just a few examples:

- Pesticide has been linked to brain damage, hormone imbalances, weakened immune system, several types of cancer, lymphoma, Parkinson's, infertility, miscarriage and birth defects just to name a few.¹⁴
- Pesticides are rarely discriminatory and also kill beneficial insects, such as bumblebees and butterflies which are crucial to the eco-system's pollination process and without which we would struggle to grow much of our food.
- Pesticides kill the primary food source for many birds and amphibians.
- An average of over 200 chemicals is found in a newborns blood stream¹². A brand new baby!

preventing pests in the home

The first and most important part of natural pest control is prevention. Keeping insects out of our homes may eliminate the need for further intervention.

- **Start by removing all attractants** such as dripping or standing water, dirty dishes, sticky counters or pet food sitting on the floor. Clean up places where insects may lurk, such as piles of building materials, yard waste or junk. Keep trash cans (indoor and outdoor) clean. Be sure to wipe up spills in your cupboards, as well.

- **Check your windows and doors** for cracks or openings where insects can get through and seal all drafts. Don't forget to check places such as electrical outlets, pet doors, baseboards, etc to avoid creepy crawlers crawling into your home.

- **Beneficial bugs**, such as ladybugs, praying mantis, or lacewings all feast on small insects that may invade your space. Many spiders, such as "daddy long legs", are beneficial also and can be placed outside if they happen to wander in.
• **Insect traps** capture insects with sticky glue, similar to fly paper, and allow you to pick them up and throw them out. Bait traps actually lure the insects to the trap and should be set on the perimeter of your property, away from your home. Many bait traps can be used over again, as well.

• **Birds!** Set up a birdbath and feeder to lure these feathered friends into your yard and let them feast on the outdoor insects. You'll be rewarded with less insects and a beautiful song! (I'd say you'd "kill two birds with one stone" but that wouldn't seem right.)

• **Chickens** are also a great way to rid your yard of insects and they supply you with a local source of food with their eggs.

• **Try insect-repelling plants** such as Marigolds and Thai Lemongrass which are said to repel many types of insects including mosquitoes. They can be planted around the outside of the house as a barrier to keep bugs out.

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**organic pesticides for the home**

It is important to realize, as pesky as bugs can be, they are a crucial link in our eco-system. We may not like them, but we do need them and it is important whenever possible to avoid eliminating them.

The following products are considered organic pesticides and are non-toxic and safe to use around children and pets.

• **Diatomaceous Earth**, or DE, is a sedimentary rock consisting of the fossilized remains of diatoms, a type of hard-shelled algae. In its finely ground form it is an effective organic pesticide by dehydrating the insect. It works well with roaches, ants, slugs, spiders and nearly all other insects. The powder can be sprinkled around wherever insects frequent, or you can mix it in water and use it as a spray (it doesn't completely dissolve; this method just allows it to be applied more effectively. *DE can also hurt beneficial insects, so use with caution!*

• **Neem Oil**, from the seed of a Neem tree, has been used for centuries in organic farming practices, as well as by cultures worldwide as an organic pesticide. It can be sprayed in and
around the home, near doors, or along baseboards and works as a repellent. Neem can also disrupt an insect's ability to eat, breed or grow.

- **Garlic Oil** or spray can be made at home with fresh minced garlic soaked for 2-3 weeks or boiled in water and strained. This can be sprayed in and around the home, near doors and along baseboards to repel most insects.

- **TerraShield** is an all-natural insect repellant that works wonders on all manner of biting, flying, or crawling insects. It's safe to diffuse through a room or apply to the skin, and can be used around the house on cotton balls or ribbons to prevent insects from invading.

- **CedarCide** is made from cedar, and has an aroma which effectively repels insects. You can use it like you would a traditional pesticide, except this organic pesticide won't make you sick as you spray your home or garden. We have found a great price through a company we are now affiliates for, Greener Country.

There are many homemade natural pest control concoctions out there; some people swear by them and others swear at them! Be sure when trying anything - from a commercial product to a homemade experiment - to read all directions and research the safety of any ingredients. Just because it's organic, doesn't mean it's always safe for use around kids or pets.

### A safer (but not the safest) alternative to chemical pesticides

It's not quite an organic pesticide but if you are still struggling with persistent insects (like roaches!), there is a safer alternative to spraying a chemical pesticide. Try my mom's old recipe:

- Boric acid (found at hardware stores)
- Enough sugar and shortening to make golf-ball size, doughy balls

The sugar will appeal to small black "sugar" ants and the shortening will appeal to cockroaches and "grease" ants. These boric acid balls can be hidden behind the fridge, in the walls or stuck under...
cupboards. They can also be hidden outside anywhere dark, moist conditions make breeding grounds for insects.

The benefit of these "roach balls" is that the chemical is contained and not being sprayed throughout the entire house or seeping into the ground, affecting our nervous systems and the health of our children, pets or garden. And often the insects take it back to their nest, which can eliminate the entire problem. (I haven't yet tried it but I've heard you can make this recipe into an organic pesticide by substituting the boric acid for DE, listed above.)

However contained this may be, please keep in mind that it can still dangerous to pets and children. Hide them well...or better yet, do everything in your power to avoid their use as you continue going green at home.

your organic garden:
pest control without chemicals

Organic garden pest control might seem like an oxymoron. But according to Nature, it's not. It contains a mixture of preventative methods, as well as supporting the natural eco-systems found within nature. Although there are natural products for controlling insects, intervention by such means should be the last thing done.

The most important thing to remember in regards to controlling pests in the yard and garden: annihilation is not the answer!
A healthy ecosystem, as well as a healthy yard and garden, must have insects. They are a crucial part of the biological system and should not be eradicated. Insects feed birds, lizards and other wildlife, assist in pollination efforts, help break down soil nutrients and compost and become soil nutrients/compost themselves when they die.

They are a vital link and removing them from your garden or yard completely will surely cause more problems than it solves.

benefits of organic garden pest control

Plants sprayed with pesticides lack certain nutrients only produced when they are nibbled on by insects. Likewise, pesticides kill beneficial soil microbes, creating an unhealthy environment open to disease without any biological means of protecting itself.

Contact with pesticides has been linked to fertility issues, childhood cancer, Alzheimer’s and much more. Even so-called safe usage, which is rarely seen, still puts chemicals into your blood stream, putting you at risk years later.

Also, keep in mind that beneficial insects are slow to reproduce. When an insect attacks, beneficial insects move in to eat. But when a pesticide is sprayed and kills most of them off, it will take many weeks to reestablish themselves. Harmful insects, such as aphids, are much faster to reproduce. They will quickly replenish in numbers before the beneficial insects have time to recover, leaving your plants in worse shape (and a gardener more likely to spray again, perpetuating the cycle).

prevention is the best medicine

Before insects invade or become a problem, the following organic garden pest control methods should be applied to prevent infestations from occurring.

- **Maintain Soil Health:** This is the first and foremost step to organic garden pest control. Sick plants are much more susceptible to insect invasion. Keep them watered properly (not too
much, not too little), amend the soil with compost and mulch, use only organic fertilizers and plant them in the right place so they are getting proper amounts of sun and shade. Compost tea is also a great way to keep plants happy and it helps to take care of anything funky going on in your soil by introducing healthy bacteria. You may also wish to test your soil for nutrients it could be lacking. An inexpensive test can be purchased at garden centers or you can order a professional test that will give you much more comprehensive results.

- **Companion Planting:** Companion planting is another important part of your organic garden. Pest control examples of this: garlic is said to drive off aphids from roses; basil is used to protect tomatoes. Things should be planted closely together (high-density) and interspersed with other plants to create a permaculture-like habitat, rather than a monoculture. I like this guide from Golden Harvest Organics but there are many more sources out there, as well.

- **Silver Reflective Mulch:** A fairly new tool in the organic garden pest control toolbox but it’s pretty cool. It’s a thin, silver sheet laid down over the soil and around plants. It works two ways: One is by being shiny and freaking out birds and insects to keep them away. The other is by shining light on the underside of leaves to repel shade-seeking insects. You can read one test gardeners success with silver reflective mulch here.

- **Neem Oil:** This is an oil from the pressed seed of a Neem tree. It is used worldwide to repel insects, such as ants, aphids, beetles, caterpillars, cockroaches, houseflies, leafminers, mealy bugs, nematodes, snails, termites, and many more, including controlling fungus and mildew. It requires processing and should be purchased commercially for the proper concentrated use in organic garden pest control.

- **Garlic Oil Spray:** Garlic oil is also used to repel insects. You can make a garlic oil spray by soaking fresh minced garlic in vegetable oil for several weeks. This can be mixed in a spray bottle with about 4 parts water to one part oil and sprayed on your leaves or around the stems of your plants. Alternatively, as described above with companion planting, some insects may also be repelled by planting an abundance of garlic closely together with other plants.
When repelling and prevention don't work, it's time to move onto other organic garden pest control methods. Practiced in the following order, you will save the big guns for last.

- **Beneficial Insects:** Beneficial insects are a must in organic garden pest control. Lady bugs, praying mantis, some spiders, lacewings, certain types of nematodes and even wasps will take care of many insect problems. Certain flowers will attract these insects: herbs like dill, fennel and cilantro; flowers like cosmos or geraniums or even dandelions are said to attract ladybugs. Or you can get a local community going by purchasing them from a local plant nursery. Just remember if you don't have enough for them to eat they won't hang around, so don't purchase 500 ladybugs before you've seen any aphids. [Read more about beneficial insects here.](http://sustainablebabysteps.com)

- **Other Beneficial Creatures:** Many amphibians or reptiles, such as lizards or frogs, will happily gobble up your insect problem. [Backyard birds](http://sustainablebabysteps.com) will often do the same. It's important to create a safe, healthy habitat for such animals to live. Keep your cats indoors, set up a birdhouse or maintain a small water source (something that can be easily cleaned in case of mosquitoes). You may even consider creating an entire habitat and purchasing frogs naturally found in your area that can set up house in your yard. But be sure you never introduce an animal not normally found in your area!

- **Hand-picking:** This may be time-consuming but in most healthy gardens it is an efficient, inexpensive (and sometimes, therapeutic!) way of taking care of small insect populations, such as tomato horn worms or aphids. Check the undersides of leaves, and squish bugs you find or remove the leaf entirely. Practicing this organic garden pest control technique for a few minutes each day should prevent most infestations from becoming serious problems.

- **Copper and Salt:** Used in areas with a slug problem, copper can be purchased in strips to place around plants, or the edges of containers or garden beds. Slugs avoid the shock the copper gives them. Salt will also kill slugs in high enough concentrations, although too much salt in the soil can be unhealthy for plants.

- **Sticky Traps:** Traps (similar to fly paper) attract insects with color or odor, trapping them on the highly sticky surface. These are great during the first insect hit of the season for removing a large number of bugs. The traps can then be thrown away.
• **Soapy or Oily Water:** Spraying soapy water or an oil and water mixture suffocates insects, such as aphids. It is safe to use around beneficial insects, but needs reapplying after rain. The sun can also cause burn spots on sprayed leaves, so spray primarily on the undersides.

• **Bacillus thuringiensis:** Bt is a naturally occurring bacteria found in the stomachs of caterpillars. Incidentally it’s used to kill caterpillars, such as the grape leaf skeletonizer or tomato hornworm. It is mixed with water and sprayed on the underside of leaves. I have not had much luck with this but many people swear by it for any type of caterpillar. Again, it can affect beneficial caterpillars, such as butterflies, so it is really a worse case scenario product.

• **CedarCide:** This completely natural, non-toxic, chemical-free product is made from cedar oil, a natural bug repellant. The pleasant smell is safe for plants, animals, and humans and works on a multitude of insects.

• **Diatomaceous Earth:** According to Wikipedia, DE is "a naturally occurring, soft, chalk-like sedimentary rock that is easily crumbled into a fine white to off-white powder". It’s the fossilized remains of diatoms and acts both as a repellent and a bug assassin. It can be sprinkled on or around the plant or mixed in water and sprayed onto the leaves. To the bug it supposedly looks shiny and sparkly to scare them off. If any daring bugs go near it, it sucks the moisture out of them. I’ve also been told it is razor-sharp to insects and can cut their exoskeletons. *DE can harm beneficial insects so it should only be used when absolutely necessary!* It can be drying to the skin of humans and should not be inhaled (like any rock sediment, I suppose). Also, it may not work well in very humid climates and will usually need reapplying after rain. *Be sure to purchase food grade DE, not the stuff they sell at pool supply stores.*

• **Integrated Pest Management:** Complicated and involved, I couldn't begin to explain this method of organic garden pest control in its entirety. It relies on knowledge of the specific insect and its life cycle, preventative measures, manual and biological controls, and lastly, chemical or organic pesticide intervention. Usually used in large scale farming, it can be applied to organic garden pest control at home by forgoing any chemical pesticide.
give it time to balance out

If you have previously sprayed chemical pesticides, give your garden time to balance itself out. You may see an increase in insect attacks and you may even lose a few plants. Stay on top of it with these organic garden pest control methods; don't sit back and hope Nature sorts it out. You created a imbalance and Nature will appreciate your help in sorting it out. And don't expect a balanced ecosystem overnight or even in a year. Restoring health to an unhealthy environment takes time, work and lots of compost.

_Gardening requires lots of water - most of it in the form of perspiration._
_-Lou Erickson_

treat & prevent head lice naturally

First of all, if you're in need of a home remedy for head lice, let me lend you my condolences.

Head lice treatment is never a fun and exciting time in anyone's life. It is, however, pretty common. There aren't many statistics on the issue but Google reports over 300,000 searches solely on the term "head lice" alone. Knowing how to treat it safely is one thing; knowing how to prevent lice is another. This article will cover both.

There are many types of conventional treatments for lice, such as shampoos and sprays. There are also some dangerous alternative treatments, such as gasoline or kerosene.
But if you're aware of dangers of pesticides you ought to be aware that shampoos and other **conventional treatments require using pesticides directly on your or your child's head!**

With pesticide usage linking to leukemia, autism, infertility, birth defects, ADHD, Parkinson's, miscarriage and countless types of cancers, it's outrageous to think of applying this poison directly to our skin!

But left untreated, well...I'll let you Google that one.

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**head lice information**

It's important to know a few things about this problem, before you use a home remedy for head lice.

- **Early symptoms of lice** include itching behind the ears and at the nape of the neck. Don't scratch too much! It can lead to skin irritation and infection.

- Lice do not spread from pets to humans or vice versa (unless maybe your pet is a farm animal). They spread through direct person-to-person contact or indirect contact, such as hats, scarves, clothing, jackets, furniture, bedding, brushes, hair ties, toys and so on.

- **The life cycle of head lice is as follows:** Nits (eggs) come first and incubate about 7-10 days. After another 10 days or so, female lice can begin hatching approximately 90 eggs over a 30 day lifespan on a host (person). However, off a host (person) live 1-2 days in warm weather (86 degrees F) and 2-4 days in moderate weather (74 degrees F). Nits (eggs) can live off the host for up to 10 days and will not hatch in temperatures cooler than 68 degrees F.

- Do lice jump? Nope. Nor do they fly. But they do crawl from item-to-item or person-to-person.

- The occurrence of lice have nothing to do with socioeconomic levels, race or gender according to many studies, but long hair may increase the risk simply because there is more hair for the lice to come into contact with.

- Lice infestations have nothing to do with cleanliness. In fact, "dirty" hair might actually prevent lice since the natural oils in the hair may repel lice.
Not every home remedy for head lice is valid. Some are pointless, others might just be lucky, some are downright dangerous. Only the ones listed below are backed by science and nature.

Now that you have some background head lice information, keep those things in mind as we start talking about your best bet for home remedy for head lice below.

the best remedy for home head lice

We know pesticides are dangerous, as are things like gasoline (please don't do that!). But there are also plenty of myths about what actually works. Mayonnaise, oil, vinegar, and so on have all been tried, but which one is best? After all, you don't want to have to do this over and over again.

Below is the very best home remedy for head lice, followed by the best advice on how to prevent lice:

combing (with optional olive oil lice treatment)

Yup, good old combing is the #1 most effective home remedy for head lice.

Actually, it's the best treatment of any kind! Hmm, is it any wonder why popular shampoos still recommend combing? It may just be that their dangerous products aren't even doing the real work; your combing is!

Here's what you'll need for this home remedy for head lice:

- A regular brush
- A sturdy, metal nit comb found at many beauty supply stores, drugstores or online. Avoid plastic if possible as it may bend or break.
- Hair clips, pins or ties to section off the hair. (All of these will need treatment, found below.)
- Olive oil
- A towel to wrap around the shoulders
• A bowl of warm soapy water to rinse the comb

• Some entertainment! Unless nit combing is particularly entertaining for you, I recommend some good movie rentals, games or books to help you and/or your child (or friend) through the process and pass the time quickly.

Once you have those things, here's what you'll get to do with them:

• Start by brushing the hair with a regular brush to remove any tangles without pain. You'll treat this brush so don't put it away yet.

• Next coat the hair with olive oil. Lice treatment with olive oil keeps the hair slick and wet so that it's easier to comb. It *may* help by suffocating lice as well, but does nothing for nits.

• Section the hair with your clips, and taking very small sections as a time and getting as close to the scalp as you can, begin gently pulling the comb through the section of hair several times. This will help to remove lice and nits (nit-picky anyone?). Check closely as you go and rinse the comb well in the soapy water before re-combing. Because of the olive oil lice treatment, you may need to stop and wash the comb thoroughly before you continue on.

• When you finish with one section pin it clear away from any uncombed hair and continue on to the next sections. Are you having fun yet?

• After you've finished combing the hair, flush the soapy water down the toilet and use a regular shampoo 2-3 times to remove any oil. (You probably won't need any conditioner after all that oil. One of the "side effects" of an olive oil lice treatment is healthy, shiny hair!)

• Boil the lice comb and your brush for 15 minutes, or soak for 30 minutes in 100% white vinegar or alcohol, and then wash with hot, soapy water and a toothbrush and rinse well before using the comb on the next family member or putting it away.

**IMPORTANT:** The entire family should to be checked and treated, just in case. Be sure clean instruments are used for each person. And don't forget you'll be doing this again in 10 days to ensure...
no nits were left behind that have hatched (10 days will ensure they haven't begun laying their own eggs).

**ALSO IMPORTANT:** You're not done yet! (You didn't think that was the hard part did you?) In order to really learn how to prevent lice from occurring again, there are a few extra extra steps you get to take.

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**a head lice tea tree oil treatment**

Tea tree oil is an all-natural essential oil derived from the melaleuca plant. A head lice tea tree oil treatment is recommend because of the oil’s natural antiviral, antibacterial, antifungal and antiseptic properties.

A head lice tea tree oil treatment is NOT a substitute for combing. Even with pesticide shampoos, combing is still necessary.

But tea tree oil and other essential oils (specifically aniseed, cinnamon leaf, red thyme, peppermint, and nutmeg) were found in one Icelandic study to be effective when combined in alcohol and followed with an essential oil/vinegar/water rinse the next day. Whether it was the alcohol, the vinegar rinse or the essential oil mixture that did the trick, the fact remains that it worked, as was shown by several other worldwide studies using essential oils.

To make this home remedy for head lice tea tree oil treatment, you'll need:

- 100% tea tree oil...be sure to test for skin sensitivity or allergy.
- Vodka or olive oil
- Cotton balls

Mix the 2 ounces of oil with 20 drops (or more if you want to get all crazy with it) of tea tree oil. Dab this into the hair using clean cotton balls (changing them out as you go). Make sure they get tightly sealed in a bag and thrown away.
For an alternative home remedy for head lice, tea tree oil can be mixed with alcohol (vodka works great) and sprayed into the hair. Allow either of these treatments to sit in the hair for at least 12 hours before shampooing. You can easily reapply the alcohol/tea tree spray frequently as a way to help prevent re-infestations.

Click here to learn more about melaleuca or order our favorite brand.

And now for the fun part!

how to prevent lice

Knowing how to prevent head lice is actually a two-part solution: 1. Preventing your children from getting them in the first place and 2. Preventing re-infestations in your home. Let’s start with #2, preventing re-infestations.

how to prevent lice from reoccurring

It begins with “thoroughly” treating the heads of everyone in your home TWICE - once upon finding the head lice and again 10 days after the first treatment. Yes, everyone. No, that does not include the pets, as head lice don’t go after pets, only humans.

After treating everyone’s head and before you go back to your happy, lice-free life, you get to treat the entire house (or at least everywhere anyone has been since the infestation may have occurred).

Here’s where not to miss:

- **Bedding:** All sheets, pillow and cases, mattress covers, blankets and anything else on the bed (such as stuffed animals) need to be treated.

- **Toys and Stuffed Animals:** Hard surfaces will need to be treated, as well as soft surfaces.
- **Clothing:** Clothes, jackets, hats, scarves, etc that has been worn and anything from the closet or drawers that may have come into contact (directly or indirectly) with what has been worn will need to be treated.

- **Furniture:** Chairs, couches, mattresses and so on cannot be ignored. *Don't forget about the vehicle seats and car seats or boosters!*

- **Personal Care Items:** Combs, brushes, hair accessories, bath towels, and so on will also need your attention.

- **Work or School Items:** Backpacks, briefcases, desk chairs, jacket hooks, cubby holes, etc should all be cleaned thoroughly.

There are several ways to treat these items using a home remedy for head lice strategy. **Choose the best option from the following list:**

- **Machine washing:** Very hot water and some extra detergent will take care of towels, bedding, and other machine washable items that can handle the heat.

- **Vacuuming:** Thorough, slow vacuuming with a strong vacuum is great for furniture, vehicles, etc.

- **Soaking or Boiling:** Great for hard items such as combs or some toys.

- **Heat:** Whether it's a hot clothes dryer, a cloth hair dryer or even a hot iron, heat (getting the item to at least 140 degrees F) kills lice and nits.

- **Freezing:** Lice and eggs will both be killed if frozen overnight.

- **Quarantine:** No, not people! But for other objects that can't be washed, boiled, thoroughly vacuumed or frozen, storing it in a tightly sealed bag or container for no less than 2 weeks will ensure that all nits and eggs have died.

- **Personal space:** Talk to the whole family about not sharing personal items or space, especially in schools, at least until any outbreak is under control.
• **Hair cutting:** If you're desperate for ideas on how to prevent lice...since lice need something to hold onto, short hair does make re-infestation less likely. Make sure the person who is getting the lice is on board with this one though, okay?

**how to prevent lice from occurring in the first place**

Total prevention may not be possible. Lice are pesky little buggers after all. But there are a few ideas that might help your home remedy for head lice efforts.

• **Keep hair tied up:** Long hair comes into contact with more things, so when going to the movies, work or school keeping your hair up, or even wrapped, may help. Shorter hair would also prevent infestation for the same reason.

• **Shampoo less often:** It's possible that lice avoid natural oils in the hair. Weaning your hair off daily washes and down to once a week may help prevent infestations.

• **Maintain personal space:** Schools and work environments are most likely to spread lice. Talk to the family about not sharing items or hugging if lice is going around.

• **Add essential oils to your shampoo:** You can use the ones mentioned about in the tea tree oil head lice treatment information.

• **Use essential oils regularly:** You can add drops to a spray bottle to mist yourself or dab it on to repel or kill lice. You can also use it in your shampoos and cleaners.

Remember: even if it's not a home remedy for head lice, it's still a lot of work. And it's hardly any fun for kids or adults.

**My best home remedy for head lice advice would be to not take it too seriously.** Make it as fun as it can be. Laugh, make jokes, learn about it together, listen to music or watch funny movies as you comb so that the experience can be remembered as something other than the worst experience of your family’s life.
My poor husband is a magnet for any biting insects and is always looking for a natural mosquito repellant, or no see'um spray to save his body from being ravaged by bugs.

Nothing seemed to work (although having him around was great for the rest of us - they would ignore our skin in favor of his!) and for the longest time, and in order to avoid spraying dangerous pesticides all over his body, he'd simply avoid going out, or sweat it out next to a campfire, or even shroud himself (much to the entertainment of the rest of us). We tried plain old citronella sprays, and old wives tales, and nothing seemed to work for him at all.

Then we started using doTERRA essential oils and found they had a proprietary blend called TerraShield. Honestly, we didn't have much hope for it, at least not for my husband, but anything is worth trying and TerraShield is pretty inexpensive so we gave it a go.

**TerraShield essential oil is now the only natural mosquito repellant that my husband will use.** It works perfectly, even with his magnetism for all biting insects. He applies it and doesn't get a bite from mosquitos, no see'ums, or anything else for hours!

This blend is a proprietary blend of 15 essential oils that works on repelling any biting insects for up to 6 hours. It's not just a natural mosquito repellant, but also works for ants, spiders, mites, fleas, and is especially good for no see'ums, (also known as biting midges). Not only does it work against biting insects, it also works to repel roaches, silverfish, and other household pests.

**the oils in terrashield**

Below are the main essential oils found in this natural mosquito repellant, as well as their role in this spray and their other benefits.
• **Lemon Eucalyptus** acts as an all-natural insecticide and repellant. It's not an oil you can buy by itself from doTERRA, but it is found in the blend to repel all kinds of crawling and biting insects. It's also found to be calming and stress-reducing for humans.

• **Citronella** is a common natural mosquito repellant, insecticidal, and repels all manner of other flying or crawling insects. doTERRA's citronella tends to be much more potent than other brands or candles that we've found and works very well in this blend.

• **Lemongrass** is an insecticidal substance and a repellant. It's also a natural antibacterial oil, has calming properties, and is antiseptic (perfect for bug bites, if you end up with one).

• **Proprietary Blend of 12 Other Oils:** Because of patent reasons the full list of these all-natural, and very potent oils isn't yet disclosed publicly. However, if you have any concerns about skin sensitivity you can call doTERRA directly (1-800-411-8151) and they will help you in making sure this oil is safe for you to use. (On a side note, I have very sensitive skin and this oil is completely safe for me to use without any reactions.)

how to use terrashield essential oil

**Around Doors, Vents, Other Entrances**
Anywhere insects might be getting in, drop 1-3 drops of essential oil on a cotton ball and place those cotton balls anywhere insects are likely to enter.

**Around the Garden**
I haven’t tried this one yet (let me know if you do!), but the same premise applies here as above. Apply the essential oil to a cotton ball and place around the garden, at the base of plants, etc. You can even experiment with spraying the leaves (though I wouldn’t spray the edible parts of any plant).

**Dog Flea Collar**
I wouldn’t recommend this for cats, as their body’s don’t function like humans or dogs and can’t process essential oils, but to repel fleas and maybe even ticks from your dog, try dropping 2-3 drops on their collar, no more than once a week. The oil is potent and lingers for quite some time to reapplication will only be necessary as the aroma fades. You can also use the natural mosquito repellent spray for the body to spritz your pet before going for walks.
**Natural Bug Spray (for the body)**
We like to turn this into a natural mosquito repellant by adding about 35 drops of essential oil with 3 oz of water. It’s best to use a metal or glass bottle for this, since plastic will erode when it comes in contact with any essential oil. Shake this mixture up well before use and spray over the exposed area of the body. This generally lasts several hours for us.

**Natural Bug Spray (for the home)**
Following the same guidelines above, I would recommend more drops (starting with 50) and experimenting from there to find what works best to repel your insects.

**Whole Home Repellant**
If you’re ever having a party, and the insects keep inviting themselves, try getting a quality diffuser and diffusing the oils throughout the area. The aroma is citrusy and very fresh, not overwhelming at all.

**Window Screen Repellant**
No, not to repel window screens. But to repel bugs from getting in through your windows (especially no see’ums from crawling through screens), this works really well. Hang a ribbon on your screen (inside or out) and drop several drops on the ribbon to repel insects and keep them from getting inside.

**where to buy**
TerraShield essential oil can only be purchased through our favorite essential oil company, doTERRA. We started using and loving the results we get from all doTERRA’s oils so much they are now the only brand we promote here on Sustainable Baby Steps.

There are several ways to get your hands on this natural mosquito repellant: retail, discounted, or wholesale.

**But retail sucks.**
So we recommend purchasing a discounted or wholesale account (similar to something like Costco) to get the best prices on this or other oils. Which is the best fit for you will depend on your needs.

**simple, all-natural home remedies for fleas**

If you have pets (pets with fur, anyway) you're likely to be needing home remedies for fleas at some point.

There are, of course, a gazillion chemical ways to deal with them, but that's not what we're here for, is it? Because those chemicals are pesticides: bad for us, bad for our pets and bad for the world.

And because - here's the kicker - they're starting to not work. The fleas (just like bacteria and half the rest of the world) are building up a resistance to what we're trying to kill them with.

Thankfully, there are plenty of natural home remedies for fleas. And if they're done right, they're safe and effective...and some of them even smell pretty good.
herbal remedies for fleas

If you're here on this site there's a pretty good chance you're already using herbs for something, so expanding their use to include home remedies for fleas is a natural and easy way to handle fleas.

You have a lot of options for herbal remedies for fleas, too: Fleabane, rosemary, lavender, anything in the mint family (including, yes, catnip), eucalyptus, citronella, chamomile, tansy or cedar.

There are a bunch of ways to use these herbal remedies for fleas:

- Pick a bunch of fleabane, dry it, and stuff your pet's bed with it.
- Make rosemary lavender tea, spray your pet with it, and gently rub it into their fur (you can also apply the tea to their bedding).
- Scatter chamomile flowers or powder around the house – along the walls, wherever your pet sleeps, wherever the little bastards might be hiding (the fleas, not your pets).
- If your pets spend a lot of time in your yard, growing these flea-repelling herbs there will help, as well.

Looking for a good source of herbs? Check out our favorite spot:

![Mountain Rose Herbs](https://www.mountainroseherbs.com/)

essential oils for fleas

IMPORTANT: You might be looking at creating a herbal spray (above) and think, "Hey, I can just do that with essential oils, too! Dilute them in water or a carrier oil, and I'm good to go."

This is perfectly safe for dogs, and for them, yes, it's a convenient shortcut. But **DO NOT EVER use essential oils with cats.**
Your cat's liver isn't equipped to process essential oils, and whether the oils are ingested, applied to the skin, or even inhaled, they're likely to build up in your cat's system and eventually (or quickly!) build up to toxic levels.

So with your cats, take your time making the tea. I won't say your cats will thank you for it (they're cats, after all) but it really is the best way to do it. (For more information about essential oil toxicity in cats, please see this article on essential oils and cats.

The following essential oils are safe and effective for dogs:

- **TerraShield**: A proprietary blend of 15 essential oils (including some mentioned below).
- Lemongrass
- Eucalyptus
- Melaleuca/tea tree
- Rosemary
- Clove
- Patchouli
- Peppermint
- Cedarwood
- Citronella

**Be sure these essential oils are high quality and pure to avoid making your dog sick!** The links above will either direct you to a store page or a description on our website for more info or you can click here to learn more about choosing the best essential oils.

These essential oils can be added to shampoo, used to wash bedding, dropped onto bedding, used to make a homemade flea collar or used to make a spray.
One of our home remedies for fleas is a homemade shampoo for our dog with the following:

- 1 tsp. of Dr. Bronner's peppermint castille soap
- Up to 10 drops total of a mix of essential oils
- 12 ounces of water

We mix this in a squirt bottle (like a ketchup bottle, but clear to make it easy to see), shake it up and lather it on really thick starting at the muzzle, avoiding the eyes and moving back. Leave the lather on and the fleas will start climbing up for air, slowly down and dying and can be picked or rinsed off.

**To make a homemade dog flea collar** you can either drop the essential oils directly on the collar or a bandana, or you can mix the essential oils in 12 ounces of water, soak the collar for several hours, and allow to dry before putting it on the dog (remember, not cats). It will usually last about a week and helps to repel the fleas. Although we haven't tried it, it's worth looking into these natural flea collars for cats and dogs as well.

**preventing fleas with diet and supplements**

Fleas, like other parasites, prefer to prey on weakened victims - so the healthier your pets are, the less the fleas will bother them. Feed them good, healthy, natural food free of grains and consider a raw food diet for them as well. Keep them properly cleaned and groomed - whatever's appropriate for their breed.

Some pet owners have had good luck deterring fleas with supplements of brewer's yeast and garlic, such as this one from Four Paws. These generally have to be started well in advance of a flea infestation, so starting them over the winter may prevent fleas in the spring.

And be sure to give your pets plenty of time with you, and plenty of love.
Along with these herbal home remedies for fleas, **keeping a clean house** is important. Yeah, I know you're busy. You should see my place. But flea larvae feed on debris and organic matter – say, the stuff caught in your carpet (and mine) – so the cleaner you keep your house, the less they'll have to eat, and the fewer will survive to the adult stage - that's what bites your pets. Plus, the cleaner your house is, the fewer places the fleas will have to hide.

Wash your pet's bedding (and yours, if they sleep on the bed with you) often. Vacuum often, and thoroughly. Use that little attachment-thingy to get into the corners of the room, the bed, and the couch, too. Even though the little buggers prefer to live on your pets, they'll totally hide, too, and you need to get the eggs as well as the live ones.

One of the most important steps in any home remedies for fleas: Bathe your pets. Yes, even your cats.

Plain old soap-and-water will do a lot to deal with fleas (be sure you're using **natural soap** though!) or follow the shampoo recipe above for dogs. Leaving the suds in your pet's fur for three to five minutes will eliminate any fleas in their fur.

A good flea comb - available at any good pet store, or at your veterinarian's office - is another invaluable tool in home remedies for fleas. Comb your pet's fur thoroughly to remove fleas, larvae, and flea eggs. Again, use that soapy, hot water to your advantage - dip the comb into it often to clean off (and kill) the fleas.

I've heard a lot of people talking about borax as a natural and effective way to get rid of fleas, and adding borax to your laundry will help kill any fleas or eggs that survive all the washing.

But in general I prefer **diatomaceous earth** for my home remedies for fleas.

If you plan to use diatomaceous earth in your home remedies for fleas, be sure to purchase the food-grade stuff. Don't buy the variety that they sell at pool supply stores; it's not safe for you or your pets.
Diatomaceous earth (DE) is neat stuff - it's made from finely-ground fossils of ancient, tiny sea creatures. It's entirely harmless to mammals, although it can cause irritation if inhaled, but for insects, it's like walking on broken glass, and it'll kill them quickly and effectively.

Sprinkle a light layer of DE around wherever fleas are a problem. Keep your pets out of the room while you're spreading it, and just to be safe, wear a dust mask or bandana over your mouth and nose. Use a broom to work it into the carpet, down where the fleas and larvae and eggs hide, and use your hand or a small, stiff brush to work it into upholstery and bedding. Once it's worked in, you can take off the mask and let your pets back into the room; it's now totally safe. Vacuum as you normally do; you'll need to re-treat the room after vacuuming, though.

You can even put it right on your pets - sprinkle it carefully into their fur (keep it away from their head and mouth, so they don't breathe it) and gently rub it in. It will kill any fleas that try to walk through it. Yes, they'll lick it off, and yes, this is fine - in fact, you can even mix a little diatomaceous earth into their food to kill intestinal parasites!

I can't speak highly enough of diatomaceous earth used in natural remedies for fleas - it's cheap, safe, and effective.

when to throw in the towel

It's important to try everything possible before resorting to medication. But after 2-4 weeks of no improvement, it's important to talk to your vet.

Fleas can cause illness and pain in your pets, resorting in even more medications, side effects, vet bills and discomfort. If natural remedies for fleas don't seem to be working after several weeks use them as preventative medicine for the future, and seek conventional solutions for immediate help for your pet.
how to get rid of flies and fruit flies naturally

Need to get rid of flies too, huh? We had this question come in from one of our readers:

*We seem to get either a daily batch of ladybugs or flies this time of year. Right now it is flies. Is there some reason they come inside this time of year and what is the best way to get rid of and prevent them?*

Just like spiders or other insects, flies tend to come inside for two reasons: either to get out of the cold or to find a food source.

To some extent this is going to be unavoidable. In other words, we're always going to find an insect or fly here or there. Creating a completely sterile environment is going to be impossible unless you want to resort to massive amounts of chemicals, which if you're here, I'm pretty sure you don't.

There are two main ways to get rid of flies through prevention:

- Removing their food source
- And sealing their way in

Start by putting screens on your windows and doors and checking for drafts. This will not only prevent flies from getting inside it can help you lower your heating bill in the winter by preventing the escape of heat and lower your AC bill in the summer by allowing you to open doors and windows during the cooler parts of the day.

Once you've done that check around outside for any food sources.

Do you have a compost pile swarming with flies? This is a good indication that your "greens" and "browns" aren't balanced. Or you might simply cover the pile with leaves, straw, or something else to keep odors done while it's decomposing. (Read more about home composting here.)

Do you have barn animals that attract flies? It may seem like a no-win situation but it's not. Getting the proper bedding in a chicken coop helps to turn their poo into compost faster (and keep them warm in
the winter). And adopting some permaculture or sustainable practices - such as more space, co-mingling (chickens break up cow poop and turn it into the soil), proper bedding, and so on.

If you have a garden, compost pile, or are working towards it you might consider some backyard chickens just to pick through compost and gobble up the larvae before it has the chance to turn into a fly infestation.

Removing their food source from indoors is also important in order to get rid of flies. Make sure you trash can has a lid (you may even want to add some baking soda to the bottom of the can to decrease odor). Any indoor compost pail that is awaiting being transferred should also be maintained - take it outside frequently, cover it with a cloth cover (look on Etsy), or keep it closed altogether so no odor can attract flies. Make sure cat boxes are cleaned frequently and check for any other problem areas in the home (but mostly you'll find them in the kitchen).

All of these things will help prevent them, but how do you actually get rid of flies and fruit flies?

Well, prevention and patience is the simplest route. Their lifespan isn't that long and once you take away their food source they'll die pretty quickly.

But if you need to get rid of flies quickly (let's say you have company coming for dinner) there are a few things you can do.

You can grab your vacuum attachment and suck them right out of the air. No joke. It works and it's kinda fun - heck, you can get the kids involved and see who can get the most points.

You can attract them into a fly trap, such as this reusable and non-toxic version that we've used for serious infestations in our yard.

Or you can make a homemade fly trap. Start a plastic container with a lid, something you don't mind never using for anything but flies (the kind that your sour cream comes in, for instance). Take a knife
and puncture some small slits in the lid, as many as you'd like. These need to be just big enough for it to crawl into, so small for fruit flies. Another option is to use a plastic 2 liter bottle stolen from your neighbor's trash (cuz we don't use plastic anymore, right? *ahem*). Cut off the top of the bottle and turn this part upside down so that the opening is now creating a funnel into the bottle. The genius flies can crawl in but not back out again. (Don't ask me why. They just don't get it.) You can also create a trap like this with a mason jar and paper funnel.

Once you have your trap, you'll need your bait. I've found that no one solution is ever guaranteed, so test out a few options to see which your flies go for. For fruit flies, you can try vinegar, white wine, or even just some rotting fruit inside from your compost pail inside. The stronger the aroma, the better. You might consider mixing soap and vinegar to attract and then coat their wings so they can't fly. Experiment with bitter, sour, and sweet items (such as juice). Again, we've never personally had luck with any one option.

Once your trap is filled you have two options: throw it away and start again, or pop it in the freezer (or outside if it's cold) to kill the flies. You can rotate two traps this way, cleaning them out and refreshing their bait as needed.

But maybe you want to have a little fun and introduce your kids to the wonders of Nature? Yes, I'm thinking of a venus fly trap. :)

sustainablebabysteps.com
Hi there! We are Justin and Tara Wagner, founders and creators of Sustainable Baby Steps, where we are dedicated to guiding you to go green, save (or make) money sustainably, and live healthy... without stress, without wasting time or energy, and without overwhelming yourself with information.

I (Tara) am the one who does much of the writing at SBS and I'm almost as crunchy as they come. I'm pretty sure I learned it from my mother; she had a compost pile and used cloth grocery bags before it was hip. She was my role model for simple and frugal living.

My first independent steps into a natural lifestyle began when I became a massage therapist at 19. I worked in the healing arts for many years, soaking up all I could about natural health and wellness.

*It confirmed my upbringing and my intuition about nature and health: We can work with it or against it and it's all connected.*

Learning about our bodies and natural healing led our family of three to learn about organic foods, the harmful nature of chemicals, alternative medicines, including essential oils, and much more. I was living green by default, although health and wellness were my primary objectives. It wasn't until I learned about the tiny footprint of "urban homesteading" that I really dove head-first into living "beyond green" and dedicated myself to doing all I could for the planet.

Together, we've grown and preserved our own food, downsized our lifestyle, learned to conserve, precycle and make do, and yes, switched to cloth toilet paper! All of our sustainable actions have not only saved us money but provided a passive income for us, and also brought us closer together. Living sustainably is just a way of life for us; almost as unconscious to us as breathing.
I began this website as a way to share what I have learned, and in hopes of inspiring others. We may not all be able to do everything, but we can all do quite a bit when we're inspired and dedicated. And with each of us doing our part, we can make such a difference!

the hidden benefits of sustainable living

A funny thing happened when we committed ourselves fully to a sustainable lifestyle: the world opened up! We met the most amazing people, learned the most amazing things and reconnected in ways we never imagined; not only to our surroundings, but to our food, our bodies and spirits, our ideas on life and our loved ones.

This lifestyle has a way of changing people, making them question and examine their lives and beliefs and focus on what truly matters. And that's certainly what it did for us.

We lived in Las Vegas, NV all our lives (about as unsustainable a city as they come) but were constantly craving a community that fits our ideals and so we made a radical change. Although we have no idea where we'll end up, as of right now we're traveling the USA in search of that one amazing place to call our sustainable home. We are currently living full-time on the road in a 34 ft solar-powered RV (5th wheel) pulled by a truck converted to run on waste vegetable oil. Can't get a smaller footprint than that!

But Sustainable Baby Steps is not my main gig. I am also a lifestyle coach and talk about applying the principles of not just making green and organic lifestyle and health choices, but being organic at our core, in our relationships and in every aspect of our lives, in order to get out of "survival mode" and finally thrive. You can find that goodness at TheOrganicSister.com.

My husband also writes his own blog about our travels at Justin-Wagner.com, and he and my son share their love of juggling at Oddball Juggling. I hope you'll check them all out on your own journey to green, organic and passionate living.
just because food **CAN** BE expensive doesn’t mean there aren’t ways around high organic food costs.

Cost is probably the biggest complaint we hear from readers who are ready to go organic. Organic foods routinely cost at least 20% more than their conventional counterparts, and it routinely keeps people from making healthier choices with their food.

But it doesn't have to be this way. That's why we created our ebook, *Making Organic Food Affordable* - to show you how we pay less for organic foods than we used to for our Standard American Diet. It includes:

- 15 chapters of **budget-cutting resources**
- Steps to save at least **15% in the next week**
- 50 pages of guidance to **cut your bill by at least 25% within a month**
- Resources, ideas, tips, hacks, and strategies all in **one easy-to-access place** and instantly downloadable

**Click here to learn more about Making Organic Food Affordable**
we started creating meal plans to cut back on the frustration, overwhelm, and sheer food boredom.

I don't know about you but the #1 killer of healthy eating for us tends to come down to three words: Not. Enough. Time.

So our family started creating a system that helped us eat sustainably in a way that made menu planning, prep, and cooking simpler, faster, and efficient. And we are now offering those meal plans to you, season-by-season. Here's what you can find in each one:

- Multiple plans for **variety in your week**
- A **printable grocery list** to grab and go
- Down-to-earth meals that **don't take all day**
- **Easy-to-follow/modify recipes** that don't require you be a pro

Click here to learn more about our seasonal meal plans
There are few products we promote as passionately (and use as widely) as these essential oils from doTERRA.

Essential oils are created through various methods of extracting precious oils from various types and varieties of beneficial plants, and this brand in particular has a potency level that can be as much as 27x the dried "herb".

We have used them with wild success for:

- Eliminating chronic knee pain *in 5 days*
- Alleviating digestive issues (especially gluten sensitivities)
- Treating cuts, scrapes, headaches, burns, etc
- Cleaning and disinfecting our whole house naturally
- Repelling insects, including mosquitoes, without chemicals

We've been shocked at their potency and floored by the very real results we've seen in our own family, as well as customers, friends, colleagues, and extended family. We proudly share these products for green and healthy living on Sustainable Baby Steps.

**Click here to learn more about using and purchasing doTERRA oils**
1. List of diseases caused by insects
2. The Link Between the Insecticide Heptachlor Epoxide, Estradiol, and Breast Cancer
3. Heptachlor Epoxide Information (PDF)
4. Indoor Pesticide Use Increases Child Cancer Rates
5. Childhood Leukemia and Parents' Occupational and Home Exposures
6. Risk of Childhood Leukemia Associated to Exposure with Pesticides
7. Environmental Articles on Pesticides and Cancer
8. Cancer and Pesticides; An Overview and Some Results of the Italian Multicenter Case-Control Study on Hematolymphopoietic Malignancies
9. Use of Agricultural Pesticides and Prostate Cancer Risk in the Agricultural Health Study Cohort
10. Household Pesticide Use in Relation to Autism
11. Environmental Toxicants and Female Reproduction
12. Environmental article on Cord Blood Test Results; Number of Chemicals Detected
13. Chemical Contaminants in Breast Milk: Time Trends and Regional Variability (PDF)
14. Chemical Pesticides: Health Effects Research
15. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Urinary Metabolites of Organophosphate Pesticides
16. Common Pesticides Cause Hyperactivity in Test Animals After Single Dose
17. Chlordane Causes Neurological Disorders and A.D.D. Symptoms
18. The Examination of the Link Between Pesticides in Food and Learning Disorders in Children (PDF)
19. Can Pesticides Increase my Child's Risk for ADHD?
20. Pesticide, Fertilizer Mixes Linked to Range of Health Problems
21. Depression and Pesticide Exposures among Private Pesticide Applicators Enrolled in the Agricultural Health Study
22. Environmental Article on Chronic Systemic Pesticide Exposure Reproduces Features of Parkinson's Disease
24. Essential oils and head lice studies