

## Resources

### **National Council on Aging**

202-479-1200  
[ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org)

Serves as national voice for older Americans

### **Pennsylvania Resources Council**

[prc.org](http://prc.org)

Provides information for HHW management in Pennsylvania

### **Pittsburgh Poison Center**

800-222-1222  
[chp.edu/CHP/poisoncenter](http://chp.edu/CHP/poisoncenter)

Provides free poison information 24 hours a day

### **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

877-696-6775  
[hhs.gov](http://hhs.gov)

Offers information on a variety of household and environmental hazards facing older adults

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

800-438-2474  
[epa.gov](http://epa.gov)

Offers information on hazardous substances in your home, as well as alternatives to household cleaners

## In Partnership With

### **Allegheny County Health Department**

[achd.net/recycling](http://achd.net/recycling)

### **Armstrong County Recycling Center**

[co.armstrong.pa.us/recycling](http://co.armstrong.pa.us/recycling)

### **Beaver County Department of Waste Management**

[beavercountypa.gov/Depts/WasteMgmt](http://beavercountypa.gov/Depts/WasteMgmt)

### **Cambria County Solid Waste Authority**

[cambriarecycles.org](http://cambriarecycles.org)

### **Washington County Planning Commission**

[co.washington.pa.us/177/recycling](http://co.washington.pa.us/177/recycling)

### **PA DEP Recycling Hotline**

800-346-4242

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**OUR MISSION:** To lead and promote individual and collective actions to preserve Pennsylvania's environmental resources for each generation.



Working to protect the environment since 1939

**PRC WEST** 64 South 14th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

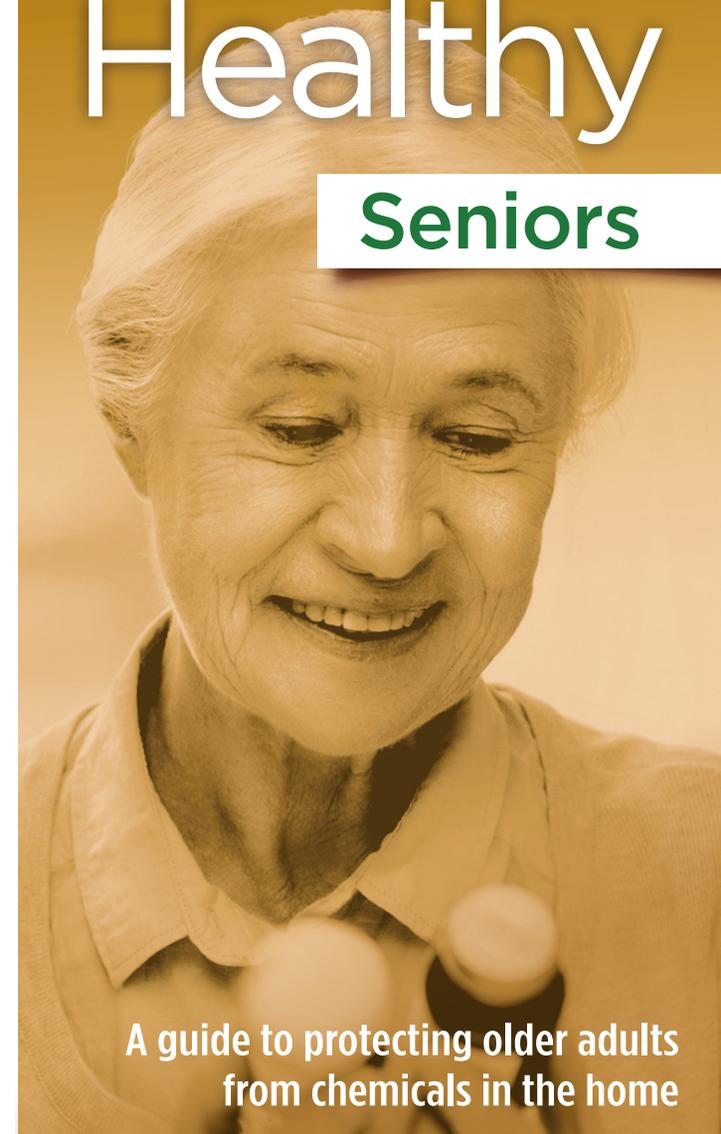
**PRC EAST** 3606 Providence Road, Newtown Square, PA 19073

[www.prc.org](http://www.prc.org)

@PRC\_Litterbug   @prc.org

# Safe & Healthy

## Seniors



A guide to protecting older adults from chemicals in the home

PLEASE NOTE: PRC does not endorse or recommend any of the groups or organizations listed in this brochure. Individuals seeking information or services from them should fully research their qualifications and capabilities as related to their needs.



**Look around your home and you may discover as much as 100 pounds of “household hazardous waste” (HHW) stored in your basement, garage, kitchen, bathroom, and garden shed.**

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, an average home can easily accumulate this amount of cleaners, pesticides, paints, automotive fluids, and other products containing hazardous components. While such products are safe to use if proper precautions are taken, problems generally arise when you use, store, or dispose of products improperly.

#### **Manage your HHW responsibly:**

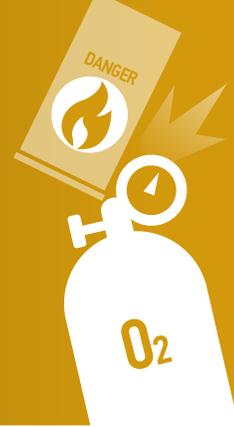
**Shopping** – Purchase the least toxic product available and estimate the quantity in advance to avoid leftover toxic materials.

**Storage** – Label all containers and keep all chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.

**Nontoxic Alternatives** – Make safe cleaning solutions at home from products such as baking soda, borax, and vinegar

**Collection Events** – Gather products and drop off at a household chemical collection event.

**Individuals who use oxygen to assist with breathing should keep oxygen tanks away from household chemicals to avoid accidental combustion.**



## **Did you know...**

- The skin of older adults is thinner and more easily penetrated by liquids.
- Individuals who use oxygen to assist with breathing should keep oxygen tanks away from household chemicals to avoid accidental combustion.
- Some older adults have poor nutrition and/or may not drink enough fluids to help buffer the effects of instantaneous poisonings.
- Older adults are at higher risk of impaired vision, which can result in misreading the labels of household chemicals.
- Medications can temporarily affect a person’s cognitive, sensory, or physical ability to safely use or manage hazardous products.
- One of the greatest poisoning hazards to older adults is prescription drugs. All medications should be taken according to health care providers’ instructions.

## **TOP TIPS for Safeguarding Seniors**

- 1. Read the Label**  
Read instructions and note expiration dates. Look for words such as “poison” and “danger.” Use each product properly, according to the instructions.
- 2. Avoid Mixing**  
Do not mix substances together unless a label states it is safe to do so. Combining household chemicals can create unsafe byproducts, such as chloramine gas from mixing bleach and ammonia.
- 3. Keep Chemicals in a Safe Place**  
Store all chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
- 4. Store in Well-Lit Areas**  
Make sure household chemicals and medications are stored in well-lit areas to avoid mix-ups.
- 5. Label Products**  
Ensure all products are clearly labeled, including homemade cleaning formulas.
- 6. Use Adequate Ventilation**  
Be aware of the dangers of toxic fumes when using household chemicals in enclosed spaces such as bathrooms and garages.
- 7. Use Common Sense**  
Always think before using household chemicals.
- 8. Use Nontoxic Alternatives**  
Purchase safe products, or make nontoxic substitutes at home.
- 9. Purchase Only What You Need**  
Estimate the quantity you need so you don’t end up with large amounts of leftover toxic materials.
- 10. Manage Materials Responsibly When Moving**  
Do not leave any HHW behind in your old home. To find safe disposal options near you, call the PA DEP Recycling Hotline at 800-346-4242.

#### **In case of accidental poisoning:**

##### **Pittsburgh Poison Center**

412-681-6669 or 800-222-1222  
24 hours/day, 7 days/week

#### **Info about collection events:**

##### **Pennsylvania Resources Council**

prc.org

#### **Info about proper disposal:**

##### **PA DEP Recycling Hotline**

800-346-4242

