

Coatings on Cookware, Clothing, and Packaging

Why we care

Nonstick pans reduce the need for cooking with oil or butter and are a breeze to clean, but at what cost? When heated to a high temperature the surface on Teflon-coated and other nonstick cookware breaks apart and emits a toxic chemical. This chemical is in a family of manmade chemicals called PFASs, which have been used for decades to make products that resist water, stains, and grease. Because PFAS chemicals don't break down, they spread. Eventually, they end up in our water and our bodies. An FDA study last year found them even in our food. Common uses include nonstick cookware, water-resistant clothing, stain-resistant carpets, and grease-resistant packaging—think microwavable popcorn bags, pizza and deli boxes.

Simple, positive change

Avoid these chemicals by following these steps:

- Use stainless steel, cast iron, enameled cast iron, or Pyrex cookware.
- Never let nonstick cookware get too hot (don't preheat empty pans or use them in the broiler), and always use an exhaust fan. If the coating gets scratched, recycle the pan in your curbside bin
- Avoid clothing with stain- or water-resistant coatings, such as Scotchgard, Polartec, or Gore-Tex.
- Forgo the optional stain treatment on new carpets and furniture.
- Avoid packaged food and takeout containers lined with greaseproof coatings.
- For more information, see [Environmental Working Group's guide](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.