

# SAFE COOKWARE & STORAGE CONTAINERS

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Most of us put a great deal of thought into the food we eat, but how often do we consider the effects of the cookware we use to prepare it or the containers we use for leftovers?

Sadly, many common pots, pans, and containers actually leach harmful chemicals into our meals, added ingredients none of us want to serve up for dinner! Teflon (non-stick), aluminum, copper, and plastic are all materials that shouldn't come in contact with your food for optimal health, yet so many of our cooking tools are made with these items!

This guide will help you determine what the safest choices are for cookware and storage containers so you can replace and rebuild your collection with equipment that supports wellness. These items can be costly, so be sure to start by replacing the items you use most often.

As with all the guides we present, the goal is to inspire, encourage, and educate you on what you need to consider as you seek optimal health. None of us will always do everything perfectly and it isn't the end of the world if you throw your apple slices into a ziploc baggie. Focus on making the changes that will have the biggest impact on your daily health and trust that you will achieve the rest in due time.

During the transition, try to avoid putting hot foods into plastic containers, don't cook with a teflon pan that is flaking, and avoid

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using aluminum and copper for acidic foods. One quality stock pot, skillet, and sheet pan can handle just about any cooking task you have—so don't feel like you need to spend a fortune to improve your cookware health!

## CAST IRON COOKWARE

A properly seasoned cast iron pan is just as non-stick as a teflon coated pan without any of the harmful chemicals that latter includes. These pans can handle very high temperatures and can even be placed in the oven or used directly over a fire when camping. Although they are heavy, they are nearly indestructible when properly cared for.

### *Tips*

- ▶ Cast iron should never be cleaned with soap or abrasive scrubbers as this will destroy the seasoning.
- ▶ Avoid cooking acidic foods like tomatoes for long periods in cast iron as it will cause more iron to be pulled from the pan into the food. Cooking in cast iron does impart trace amounts of iron into food in general, but this is a good thing for most of us!

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- ▶ Enameled cast iron is a wonderful option when you do want to cook acidic foods or avoid the extra iron.

### *Recommended Brands*

- ▶ Lodge
- ▶ Le Creuset
- ▶ Vintage Griswold and Wagner cast iron pieces

## CERAMIC COOKWARE

Ceramic cookware is more fragile than cast iron, but it heats very evenly and retains heat for long periods of time. It is easy to clean and best used at medium cooking temperatures. No metals will leach into your foods and it is non-reactive, so you can cook even acidic foods for long periods of time.

### *Tips*

- ▶ Ceramic cookware does break when dropped, so be careful!
- ▶ Be sure the brands you use are lead-free.

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## *Recommended Brands*

- ▶ Xtrema
- ▶ Dr. Mercola Ceramic Cookware

## STONEWARE

Stoneware is particularly useful for baking as it heats very evenly. When properly seasoned and cared for, it will last a lifetime and contains no heavy metals or chemicals. You can find sheet pans, muffin tins, loaf pans, and a wide variety of baking pans made out of stoneware.

## *Tips*

- ▶ Like ceramic, stoneware does break when dropped.
- ▶ Let stoneware cool completely before you wash it, as it can crack if you try to clean it while it is still hot.
- ▶ Stoneware should not be cleaned with soap as it will ruin the seasoning and absorb into the stone, impacting the flavor of your food.
- ▶ Be sure the brands you use are lead-free.

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## *Recommended Brands*

- ▶ Pampered Chef
- ▶ Le Creuset

## STAINLESS STEEL

While stainless steel is a better option than teflon, most stainless steel cookware will leach chromium and nickel into your food during normal cooking, or aluminum from the core if the pan gets scratched. If you are going to use stainless steel pans, follow the tips below.

## *Tips*

- ▶ 18/8 stainless steel should be your lowest standard. The “8” refers to the percentage of nickel used in the steel and you want this number as low as possible—so don’t go for 18/10 or higher.
- ▶ 18/0 is ideal, but it is costly.
- ▶ Do not cook acidic foods in stainless steel.
- ▶ Replace pans immediately if they become scratched or dented to a degree that exposes the core.

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- ▶ Test your stainless steel with a magnet. If a magnet won't stick well to the pan, it has a higher nickel content and should be avoided.

### GLASS STORAGE CONTAINERS

Instead of using plastic storage containers, there are a wide variety of options that won't add parabens, BPA, phthalates, or other toxins to your leftovers.

#### *Tips*

- ▶ Glass canning jars and terrine jars are the best choices to completely remove plastic from the equation and they come in a wide variety of sizes to accommodate nearly anything.
- ▶ Lifewithoutplastic.com has glass jars with cork lids and some stainless steel containers you can use safely if the food is fully cooled.
- ▶ You can also find containers such as the Glass Lock or Lock n' Lock brands that have glass containers and plastic lids that snap on airtight. As long as the food is cool and is not touching the lid, there shouldn't be any issues.

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- ▶ Pyrex also makes glass storage containers with plastic lids that press on.

### BEESWAX WRAPS

Organic cotton cloth coated in beeswax makes a wonderful substitute for plastic saran wrap.

#### *Tips*

- ▶ You can cover bowls and casseroles or wrap cut lemons and avocados to keep them fresh.
- ▶ After use, just wash with cool water, air dry, and reuse again and again!

#### *Recommended Brands*

- ▶ Bee's Wrap

### UNBLEACHED PARCHMENT PAPER

Use unbleached parchment paper to line baking sheets and cake pans, wrap garlic or potatoes for roasting, or cover foods to

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prevent over-browning instead of using foil. You can also make parchment packets to cook veggies and meats with little mess to clean afterwards!

### GLASS OR STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLES

Most of us know by now that bottled water is really just expensive tap water in most cases. Yet, even those few that really do come from fresh springs suffer from being packaged in plastic bottles that contaminate the water with toxins. Using a reusable glass or stainless steel water bottle will save money, reduce waste, and ensure the high quality water you fill it with stays pure.

#### *Recommended Brands*

- ▶ Lifefactory
- ▶ Hydro Flask
- ▶ Klean Kanteen