



Transcript: #405 Top Tips to Easily Detoxify Your Home with Tonya Harris

Wendy Myers:

Hello everyone. I'm Wendy Myers. Welcome to the *Myers Detox Podcast*. Today, we have a fantastic guest, Tonya Harris. We're going to be talking about how to detoxify your home without getting overwhelmed. We'll discuss how to go through your house step-by-step, room by room, and what to prioritize when it comes to detoxing your home. We have a fantastic show for you today. Tonya has a great new book out called [The Slightly Greener Method](#) that we're going to talk about. She's going to talk about her READ method for detoxing your home. She has a checklist for each health condition that you have, and what ingredients to look for on the label to get rid of those products or prevent buying them in the first place. We're going to talk about do's and don'ts of makeup and do's and don'ts of sunscreen. We'll discuss what kind of products to choose to clean your home.

Wendy Myers:

We're going to talk about greenwash products, products that say that they're natural but they really aren't. We're going to talk about all kinds of other products. We'll talk about foods and toxic ingredients in foods that are very, very easy to avoid. It's a very, very good education-packed show. One thing to remember is that Rome was not built in a day. When I first started learning about detoxing my home, I was planning to have a baby and I was admittedly overwhelmed. There was a lot of information. I realized like everything in my home that had toxic ingredients in it. It was very expensive to replace all this stuff. Where do you start? That's what we're talking about today on the show.

Wendy Myers:

I know you guys who are listening, are concerned about your body's burden of toxins, how to get rid of them and how to live a healthier, cleaner lifestyle. I created a quiz at heavymetalsquiz.com that helps you do just that. You take this two-minute quiz and based on your answers, you'll get the results and you'll

know your relative body burden of toxins. Afterwards you get a free video series that answers a lot of your frequently asked questions about toxins, how to detox and what kind of heavy metals tests you may want to do if you want to take things a step further. So many of your questions were answered. Just go take that two minute quiz at heavymetalsquiz.com.

Wendy Myers: Our guest today, Tonya Harris, is an award winning environmental toxin expert. She is the founder of slightlygreener.com and the creator of [The Slightly Greener Method](#). She offers busy moms simple solutions to reduce toxins without turning their lifestyle upside down. She's also the author of the highly anticipated book, [The Slightly Greener Method: Detoxifying Your Home is Easier, Faster and Less Expensive Than You Think](#).

Wendy Myers: As a childhood leukemia survivor and mother of three, including one with multiple learning disabilities, Tonya helps parents learn how toxins in the home can affect their family's health. In addition to board certification and a master's degree in holistic nutrition, she holds multiple certificates in the environmental health field. You can learn more about Tanya and her work at slightlygreener.com. Tonya, thanks so much for joining the show.

Tonya Harris: Thank you so much for having me.

Wendy Myers: Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself and how you got into detoxing your lifestyle?

Tonya Harris: I've been doing this for about 15 years now, but it's definitely not the path I thought I'd be going down. My original degree is in elementary education, but really I think this probably started back in 1982.

Tonya Harris: I'm a childhood leukemia survivor, and I was diagnosed back in 1982, just a couple of weeks before my seventh birthday. We had always grown up being told, "Be careful what you eat." Then when my son was in second grade, back in 2006, he's 23 now which I cannot believe, I went to the school because they called me in. They had seen some attention issues, which were not shocking to me. We had seen them too. But just being told, "Be careful what you eat" growing up, just kind of put a seed in my head.

Tonya Harris: I was thinking, I wonder if something in our home or maybe that we were doing, could be contributing to the symptoms. I went home, did a bunch of research and came back to the school a few weeks later, after removing artificial colors and sodium benzoate from my son's diet. Going back, I think it was about three weeks later, they didn't see a need to test him anymore. I was really hooked on this.

Tonya Harris: Then I began to realize it's not just what we eat. It's also what we put on our bodies and around our bodies in our homes. I really went on from there. I got hooked on the more natural methods, and then did a lot of research and eventually went back to school so that I could understand how these toxins really work in the body. I also wanted to help other parents the way I did. I basically went into working with environmental toxins and kind of a weaving path over the last 15 years.

Wendy Myers: It's so important to be thinking about it. You have to study this, there's a learning curve, when it comes to detoxifying your home. You have your makeup, your shampoos and your cleaning products. People don't realize, especially when it comes to cleaning products, that our bodies are equipped to deal with germs. They're not equipped to deal with chemicals as much, and people are using the super toxic chemicals cleaners. Especially now, when people are trying to kill every germ and virus possible. Can you tell us a little bit about that and your thoughts on that?

Tonya Harris: Yes. Especially right now, so many people are so concerned with it and rightfully so, but sometimes we clean with things that are almost too harsh. Coming in with bleach isn't always the best way, because bleach can be corrosive. It can be damaging when we breathe it in, especially around kids and pets. The good news is that there are nontoxic or less toxic alternatives to doing that.

Tonya Harris: Another thing is that sometimes we don't need antibacterial as much as we think we need it. That leads to all sorts of bacterial resistance, superbugs and things like that. Right now a lot of things can actually be cleaned with regular old soap and water. That's why they always said, especially in the last year and a half, wash your hands with soap and water scrub for 20 seconds. That really is the best way, especially with what we're dealing with right now. We can break down that virus membrane with soap and water.

Tonya Harris: As long as we're scrubbing for 20 seconds which gives enough foam and scrubbing to actually help bring down on that membrane. When we're cleaning too, we can be cleaning with regular soap and water and we don't need to bring in all these antibacterial things. When it comes to disinfecting, always make sure that we clean first, with that soap and water or a nontoxic all-purpose cleaner. Then coming in with something else, you can even use hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol to disinfect. We don't need to be using bleach, necessarily. There are some less toxic ways that we can disinfect and clean our homes without affecting our air quality as well.

Wendy Myers: I like bacterial soap. I want to put bacteria on my body. I don't know about you.

Tonya Harris: Exactly.

Wendy Myers: I'm trying to eat bacteria. I'm not a hand washer. I don't like washing my hands and I hate the hand sanitizers. I just refused them.

Tonya Harris: Exactly.

Wendy Myers: I'm like, "Oh, I'm allergic". I just will not use them. I will not use them. I think it's crazy, a crazy practice. There's a fear that's been induced by the media that I don't buy into at all. I don't fear germs, bacteria or viruses any more than I did before the pandemic. Can you talk a little bit about beauty products like shampoos and things that we use in our shower? What are some tips you have on those and making better choices?

Tonya Harris: With the personal care and beauty products, there's so many different ingredients and there's actually a couple different ways that they can disclose, or, I should say, hide more toxic ingredients in those products. With labeling too, there's always so many deceptive ways that they can label things. Like the label, for instance, no parabens. A lot of people are now looking for no parabens, since they may have made the news a few years ago, when they were found in the tissue biopsy of breast cancer tumors.

Tonya Harris: When you look at the ingredients, even though it says no parabens, it might have a bunch of other stuff that we want to also avoid. Another way they can do that is what I call these hidden toxins, where they can use preservatives, such as let's say DMDM hydantoin. If you see that, it could be releasing formaldehyde into your ingredients or into your product. Because they didn't add formaldehyde itself, then we have to really educate ourselves to know what to look for on the label. We wouldn't actually pick up a product that has formaldehyde in it, necessarily, because that's a known cancer causer.

Tonya Harris: When it comes to beauty products, I feel there's so many deceptive ways like saying "dermatologist recommended" or "pediatrician recommended". With beauty products especially, there's so many different ways that marketing can be kind of clever and deceptive. That's really why we need to educate ourselves.

Tonya Harris: For instance, the word fragrance, just one word, can be made up of dozens and dozens of different chemicals. We don't know what those are. A lot of them are toxic to the brain and nervous system, or can be allergenic or affect our respiratory system. There's so many different ways that that can affect us. They don't have to disclose the ingredient names, because it's considered to be a trade secret. So with fragrance, we just really don't know. That's in a lot of beauty products, as well as our cleaning products.

Wendy Myers: You're going to Vegas, rolling the dice and hoping for the best. It might smell really good, but then it really negatively impacts your hormones. I think a lot of

women listening to this are really concerned about their hormones. Well, guess what? Don't wear perfume. That is destroying your hormones, interfering with their action and no bueno. Anything else you want to add to that about ingredients you want to look for on the labels, that are problematic, or the labels that you do want to look for when you're choosing beauty products?

Tonya Harris: Oh, sure. I think another ingredient to be on the lookout for is sodium lauryl sulfate, especially for people who are prone to canker sores. Look for that in your toothpaste, if it contains sodium lauryl sulfate. They've done studies and found that when you use a sulfate-free toothpaste, the amount of canker sores can go down. It can be in things like shampoos and all these other personal care products.

Tonya Harris: Actually it's one of the ingredients they use in lab testing to intentionally irritate the skin, so that they can come in and test the calming properties of other things. Sodium lauryl sulfate, I really believe, is something that we should be on the lookout for.

Wendy Myers: They put that in to suds up that shampoo.

Tonya Harris: They do.

Wendy Myers: It sends a little lather and they're foaming at the mouth with your toothpaste, like a rabid dog.

Tonya Harris: I always tell my clients, "Okay, it doesn't necessarily need to foam. Just because it doesn't foam doesn't mean it's not doing its job." I'm glad you brought that up. Those are actually the two things I recommend replacing first, one is toothpaste. If you're not using a safe brand, if you think about it, you're putting it right into your mouth. I think, when you're having a heart attack, is it nitroglycerin they give you? They tell you to put it under your tongue. That's because the mucus membranes are so porous that it can get right into your system, quickly. The same thing goes with toothpaste.

Tonya Harris: Then shampoo, and anything else that you use daily. Replace those items first with a more nontoxic option. That way we're not going into our bathroom and thinking we have to replace everything all at once. Just replace the top one or two things you use most, because I know when we find out this information, it can get really overwhelming. We start small.

Wendy Myers: That's a good point, because when I first started learning about all this stuff, it was like, "Oh my God, I spent so much money on this NARS makeup and such, I have \$1,000 invested in my makeup."

Tonya Harris: I know.

Wendy Myers: Rome wasn't built in a day, so you can go through one room at a time and start replacing stuff. What about makeup? Talk to us about makeup and the problems there.

Tonya Harris: That's a tough one, too, because we all love our NARS and our makeup. It's really hard when we find out this information.

Wendy Myers: Orgasm. I love my super orgasm blush.

Tonya Harris: I know, it's the best blush. That's why I recommend using a more nontoxic makeup for daily use and keeping the stuff that we love for special occasions. I think when it comes to detoxifying our lifestyle, it is so important to do it. When we're just starting out, if we start out and replace everything all at once, it gets expensive. It's time consuming. We get upset, and this isn't about deprivation. If we can keep some of that makeup and just use it for special, special occasions, then that's one thing.

Tonya Harris: With makeup, we really don't know necessarily what's in there. There's so many chemicals that haven't been tested. That's why it's so important for us as consumers, to educate ourselves on what those ingredients are. The marketing and the labeling can be so deceptive. We really don't know what we're buying.

Wendy Myers: Especially if you buy stuff on Amazon. There's a lot of makeup knockoffs that have even more toxic stuff in there. You have no idea what's in there. It's from China and it's a fake. You have to be careful there as well.

Tonya Harris: Kids' makeup can have asbestos in there. I mean, it's crazy what they allow into this makeup. A lot of the companies say, "Well, we use this ingredient, but we use it in way less parts per billion than what's recommended," or whatever they say. We really could be getting multiple exposures to that every day through all different sorts of personal care products. A teenage girl uses about 17 products a day. You're probably getting repeated exposure to those, too. That's why it's so important to, as often as you can, use something that's less toxic.

Wendy Myers: When I was a teenager, there were like 50 products. I always used all kinds of creams. I wanted to take care of myself. There was a body cream and then an eye cream, and then a toner, and then a face wash. Then all the makeup, the hair and the acne stuff. It was just crazy the amount of products and masks I had. I would do masks on the weekend and put so many toxins in my body. It's insane.

Tonya Harris: Oh, I know. The good thing is, once you start using less toxic things in skincare, it's amazing to me how much less you need. You don't have to use more to make up for what the other stuff has done. They can contain things like mineral oil,

which is actually comedogenic and can cause acne. When you're using a lot of these products, especially in skincare, a lot of them can actually age your face faster. When we're using less toxic products, with less toxic ingredients, there are actually a lot fewer ingredients. The same thing goes with cleaning products, too, the fewer we actually need.

Wendy Myers: You talk about what a natural cleaning regimen for your home looks like. Mine is really, really simple. I mean, very, very, very simple. What do you recommend?

Tonya Harris: This is one of my favorite things to talk about because I feel like now, it's so easy to clean my house. I actually just use two tools. One is a countertop steamer. It's different from a clothing steamer, but I use it on everything. The steam actually helps sanitize. I found out it actually has a window squeegee, so I can now do my windows without scrubbing and no toxic chemicals. Even if I was making my own window cleaner, because that's super easy, it is just a 50/50 blend of distilled water and white vinegar. You can't get much easier than that.

Tonya Harris: Now I can just use the steamer with this attachment. I use it for everything like countertops with those goeey messes. I clean my countertops all the time, but there's always stuff on there that I see later, in the sun when it reflects. "Oh shoot, I didn't get that," so I use this handheld steamer and it gets everything off.

Wendy Myers: I have to say, I researched those and they look amazing. I didn't buy one because they were like a couple thousand dollars, but they have lower priced ones too. In the reviews, people are losing their minds over these things. You just add water and go to town. It disinfects your whole house. It's super effective.

Tonya Harris: It is. Mine was \$40. They send out coupons and discounts all the time. Even if you just sign up on their website, it's \$40, and I use it every day. Even window tracks that I always scrubbed and found so hard to do, it gets everything clean.

Tonya Harris: The other thing I did was I found a product called Electrolyzed water, which I had found when I was doing all this research last year when everything first started happening. It's actually a countertop device. You just put in a capsule that the company has that's got vinegar, salt, and water. It turns regular tap water into hypochlorous acid, I believe, and sodium hydroxide. It's a cleaner and a disinfectant. That has replaced most of my cleaners and it disinfects too. It's rated on the EPA list and is known to kill coronavirus. It's rated for hospitals and ICUs. I use that.

Wendy Myers: What brand is that? What brand is that the little mini device?

Tonya Harris: Oh, sure. Absolutely. I didn't know if you wanted brands or not. There's a couple different brands, but I use Force of Nature. It's probably about an eight inch

device that you put on your countertop. It's really easy to store when you want to put it away. I have used that for everything.

Wendy Myers: So Force of Nature and it's a little squeeze bottle?

Tonya Harris: Actually, it's just a device that you put on the counter, you fill it with water and then you pour the solution back into a spray bottle, after that.

Wendy Myers: Okay, got it.

Tonya Harris: It's really cool, and you can clean and disinfect it with it. You can clean the surface, wipe it up right away and then spray it again and leave it for about 10 minutes, and then it disinfects. It has replaced so many of my cleaners, including carpet stain remover, ironically. I can't believe that this water solution is doing that.

Tonya Harris: The other thing I like to use a lot is baking soda and vinegar. I just think it's such a good degreaser and you're not using corrosive chemicals, like for an oven cleaner. Literally, if you just sprinkle a thin layer of baking soda on your stove top, if you've made a mess, or in your oven. Just spray white vinegar over the top of it and it fizzes. Then you can wipe it away. It really gets rid of anything that's stuck on grease or gunk.

Tonya Harris: I think really with just those few ingredients, I can clean my entire house. Again, it takes a lot of the scrubbing away when you use the steamer, and then the Force of Nature really helps clean. Then the baking soda and vinegar, so I probably only have about four products now under each sink, instead of dozens, like I had before.

Wendy Myers: That saves so much money.

Tonya Harris: It does.

Wendy Myers: It's just marketing to buy this for your refrigerator and this for your toilet. It's expensive and it's toxic. There's a lot of greenwashed products out there.

Tonya Harris: Yes.

Wendy Myers: Greenwashed natural products. Can you talk a little about that method?

Tonya Harris: Oh, yes. With a lot of these things, just because it's greener doesn't necessarily mean it's nontoxic or safer for humans. Again, it is really important to educate ourselves. That's why I wrote my book too, because it's so hard to navigate the ingredients. Cleaning products too, don't necessarily have to list all of their ingredients because it's considered to be a trade secret. They get away with not

listing everything if they want it to be proprietary. A lot of times you'll just see anionic surfactants. Well, which anionic surfactants? Or it'll say enzymes, but we don't know which enzymes.

Tonya Harris: With cleaning products, it's especially hard to tell what's in them because they aren't necessarily forthcoming with the exact ingredients that they've used. Then there's indoor air quality. I'm sure we've all heard that it can be dozens of times more polluted than outdoor air. A lot of times we don't have control over it, like with building materials, carpets or paints or what we use in the house. Cleaning products can also off-gas into our homes, even when they're not being used. A really simple way to cut down on some of that indoor air pollution that we have, is to use non-toxic cleaning products. That's a simple way to help control that.

Wendy Myers: Can you talk to us about candles? A lot of people are using candles, air fresheners, plug-in air fresheners and Febreze. Please give us the low down on that.

Tonya Harris: Oh, sure.

Wendy Myers: I don't understand it. I don't understand why people want to use that.

Tonya Harris: I know and I used to love my candles, so I get it. At the same time, fragrance is something that we don't know what's in there. A lot of these things use artificial fragrance. I found a study not too long ago that found that people who use spray air fresheners had reported 25% more depression in their homes. A lot of these ingredients that we don't even realize we're breathing in, are actually affecting our brain and nervous system.

Wendy Myers: That's how I feel when I get into an Uber, and they have a little air freshener in there. I'm like, "ugh." I feel like I'm going to die.

Tonya Harris: I know.

Wendy Myers: I'm like, "I'm going to die at some point in the next 30 minutes of this ride".

Tonya Harris: It's amazing, I know. As soon as we're away from these things for a while, when we start getting them, it's like my throat gets sore and then I get a headache, really fast, so I know what you're saying.

Tonya Harris: Then again, the wax can be made of paraffin and it can release things like styrene which causes cancer. Then a lot of them have lead wicks. We can just scent our homes naturally with essential oils or use a safer candle brand, there's a lot more of those coming out. If we absolutely have to have those candles, using a safer brand is another thing to do. Those plug in air fresheners and the

spray air fresheners, sprays in general, typically use an isobutane, which is toxic to the brain and nervous system as a propellant. If we can avoid those completely, that's optimal.

Wendy Myers: Let's talk about sunscreens, because sunscreens are something that I think a lot of people don't think about when it comes to making a better choice there. Again, there's lots of greenwashed sunscreens, and there's the nanoparticle and nano zinc sunscreens. Fill us in on the natural details on that.

Tonya Harris: Sure. I agree, it's not something we always think about, but there's so many different things in sunscreens. There's two different types of sunscreen, there's a chemical sunscreen and a mineral sunscreen.

Tonya Harris: The chemical sunscreens can be made up of up to six different ingredients under their active ingredients. That's where you want to look for these. Things like avobenzene, oxybenzone, octocrylene, homosalate, things like that. The mineral sunscreens are the ones that protect with zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, and those are kind of more physical blockers. Those are the ones that are kind of white on the skin. They actually reflect the sun's rays off the body, so those are more recommended.

Tonya Harris: I don't believe that there's a perfect sunscreen. If we can, the best thing to do is just get a little bit of natural sun and then stay out of the sun, if we can. If we can't help it and we are going to be in the sun for several hours, we should use a safer sunscreen. That would be a mineral one that protects with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide.

Tonya Harris: The reason for that is because the other ingredients I had just mentioned, like the avobenzene, become photo unstable in sunlight, so it actually degrades. They actually have to add in more ingredients to make it stable. Some of these are hormone disruptors, so they can block, mimic, over or under produce hormones. There's things in them that cause skin irritation. If you look them up on websites, they'll have reviews and people will say, "Oh, got a skin rash." That's because some of those ingredients can actually cause skin irritation, when it gets in the sun.

Tonya Harris: If we can, I think just getting a little bit of natural light in off-peak hours is ideal. Wearing sun protective clothing, if we're in the sun, if we need to. Using one of those mineral sunscreens that protect with just titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. Again, I don't think there's a perfect sunscreen, but I think those are a little bit more ideal than the ones that can have the hormone disruptors, especially when we put it on our kids.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. They are so much more susceptible to the chemicals than we are.

Tonya Harris: They are.

Wendy Myers: Chemicals enter their blood brain barrier, when they're developing. I see so many parents at the beach spraying their child down with a spray sunscreen, that's not natural. It's hard to find a safe one. In the US they have them in Whole Foods, but when you go to other countries, they don't exist. They don't have natural sunscreens for the most part.

Tonya Harris: Those sprays on screens are using a propellant that's sometimes toxic to the brain and nervous system, depending on what they're using. It's one of the ways to use sunscreen incorrectly, in my opinion. Spraying it all over the place and on a windy day, how many of us are wearing that sunscreen that a parent just sprayed?

Wendy Myers: I have a natural spray one and it sprayed all over my car, and then proceeded to bake, like hardened rubber by the end of the day. The wind was not favoring me that day.

Tonya Harris: I bet not. No. It's easy to miss spots too.

Wendy Myers: Tell us about your new book [The Slightly Greener Method](#). You have a lot more tips than what we talked about today. If people liked what they heard today, and they want a little bit more, you can delve into your new book [The Slightly Greener Method](#).

Tonya Harris: It's actually a method I've developed over the last 15 or so years with my family and clients. I really feel this information is so overwhelming when we first hear it. I remember how overwhelmed and scared I was when I first heard it. I really feel like for someone who is just starting out or for someone who has already been doing this for a while, there's still so much to learn.

Tonya Harris: One of the things I did in this book was to help the reader decide where to start in their own home. When we say detoxify your home, it's like, "Where?" Then we start hearing all these things about everything being so bad for us. This book is really kind of a roadmap to help you decide where to start in your own home and then work your way up from there.

Tonya Harris: For instance, I have the reader decide what is your why? That's really the guidepost for keeping you on track, when it becomes a little hard, because it can get a little hard when you're detoxifying. It also helps you decide what ingredients you're going to start avoiding right away. For instance, mine was ADHD and brain health for children. Anything that had to do with learning disabilities or ADHD, those are the ingredients that I avoided first.

Tonya Harris: Actually I should say, after I dumped everything in my house, and realized this isn't working for me. If we can really decide on a few ingredients to start with avoiding first, it's really easy to work our way up from there. I really feel like there's three rules to live by. One is the 80/20 rule, where it works for so many things, but toxins included. If we can buy things, the safer nontoxic product, 80% of the time, we don't have to worry so much about the 20% of the time where we are either traveling or we just want the occasional treat, because we're all human. We're still going to do that. But that also helps us, gives ourselves grace, so that we can get right back on track.

Wendy Myers: If you just love that Pine-Sol smell and you just gotta have it on your wood floors.

Tonya Harris: Exactly. If you just have to do it, even if you just want a nice dessert that you usually wouldn't do. Then if you find your deal breaker ingredients, again, starting with your why? The book has a dedicated website where it has protocols at a glance. So you can look at, "Okay, if I have ADHD or if I have eczema," here's the ingredients to avoid first.

Wendy Myers: Oh, I love that.

Wendy Myers: That's so handy.

Tonya Harris: It is. Then you can just look really quickly and know, okay, so you just memorize a couple of ingredients instead of a bunch and you just start there. That's what I call your deal breakers, if you pick up a product and you see it on the label, you can put that product right down. It, literally, takes seconds.

Tonya Harris: Then the third way is to choose your top one or two. I break the book into foods and beverages, personal care products, and then cleaning products. I believe you start in those three areas and just remove or replace your top one or two most used, most toxic products, in each of those three categories. If you just keep doing that every time you buy something, pretty soon, you're going to have a really clean, non-toxic home that's detoxified. That fits into your lifestyle rather than trying to figure out how to live this way. There's so many different ways that you can make it work for you rather than struggling with it.

Wendy Myers: Yeah. It takes time. I had my point where I was planning to have a baby and I started reading all these books, and I'm like, "How did I miss this? I eat healthy and I exercise and I take supplements. How did I miss the whole non-toxic thing?" I was just baffled. It takes time to go through each room in your home and make different choices. Most people start with their diet first, cleaning that up. It's definitely a learning curve. It takes time. I beg people not to get overwhelmed, because it's easy to do.

Tonya Harris:

It is.

Wendy Myers:

We have resources like this. When I was starting out, there wasn't a ton of great makeup, natural makeup. There weren't a ton of great natural cleaning products. Now there's a ton of stuff, because the consumers are demanding that.

Tonya Harris:

Exactly. I think that's such great news, because the more we educate ourselves and the more we're buying these products, the demand is just becoming so great that the companies are coming up with them. There's new ones every day. I do like to mention, too, that a lot of times, especially when it comes to cleaning products, they can be a little bit more expensive upfront.

Tonya Harris:

That's another thing that stops people, is the expense. What I've realized is a lot of natural ones are powdered or concentrated, and they actually last longer than what you would normally use because you don't have to use as much. Another thing you can do is go to your favorite website of your favorite nontoxic product or one you want to try, and sign up for their newsletter or go to their Facebook page. A lot of times they'll have coupons that they send out repeatedly. Then it's easy to buy at a discount.

Wendy Myers:

Do you have any tips for ways that people can get rid of harmful environmental toxins within their home. Are there any first steps that you'd recommend?

Tonya Harris:

Well, I came up with a four-step process that I think kind of hits on a lot of different places, but it's the READ method, R-E-A-D. One of the first things I recommend is R, which replaces plastics in the kitchen. I feel like if you do that, that's a great start, because they can have chemicals such as BPA and phthalates, which are hormone disruptors, also linked to lower IQ and behavioral issues in children. If you can replace your top one or two most used sizes with a glass or stainless steel option. Same thing with your plastic water bottles, if you have a usable ones, replacing those with glass or stainless steel, because even if they say BPA free, that's not necessarily safer. A lot of times they'll just use a similar chemical that has similar health effects, so glass or stainless steel is a good option.

Tonya Harris:

"E" is eating organic as often as possible, which I know is not always optimal. It's not always easy but that's why I recommend going to the Environmental Working Group. They have a great site called the Dirty Dozen and the Clean 15. If you can buy organic from the Dirty Dozen, which is the produce that they've tested that has the highest levels of pesticides in there. You don't have to worry so much about the Clean 15, which have lower levels so you can buy organic or conventionally grown ones. But phthalates can act as hormone disruptors and they are also linked to ADHD in children, some of them. It's shown that if we can

eat organic for as little as several days, the levels of pesticides in our body can drastically reduce.

Tonya Harris: “A” is to avoid artificial fragrance, which we've talked about before. It's a trade secret and they contain so many different harmful toxic ingredients. Then “D” is to dust. Household dust is actually one of the biggest exposures to toxins in our home, believe it or not. Things can come in from outside or even furniture. They've found flame retardant chemicals, which can act as hormone disruptors or are linked to lower IQ, and all sorts of different things. They found lead in household dust, probably from things we brought in on our shoes.

Tonya Harris: One of the things you can do there is take your shoes off as soon as you come in the door, that'll save a lot. Then concentrate on spending time dusting in the areas where your family spends the most time. If you can do that every other day or every couple of days, then you can do your regular dusting routine the rest of the time. The good news here is that the more we dust in those areas, the less dusty our houses become overall. If your children have a play area, make sure to mop and dusted really well, and use a HEPA filter.

Wendy Myers: I assume that doesn't mean picking a feather boa and dusting and just moving it around and creating a big toxic cloud.

Tonya Harris: Exactly.

Wendy Myers: Have something to suck it up.

Tonya Harris: You can either dampen a microfiber cloth, that's a great way to do it. You can mop, and I always pour that electrolyzed water in. I just have a regular microfiber mop that has a spray bottle attached, and I just spray the floors with that and clean with that. If you sweep or if you use something that just pushes dust around and you're dry dusting, that's exactly what it does. It just pushes things around, and it makes it harder to clean up.

Wendy Myers: Where can we find out more information about you and your book? You have a website, so tell us where we can get all the details about what to do and what not to do when it comes to cleaning our home of environmental toxins.

Tonya Harris: My website is slightlygreener.com and the book is called [The Slightly Greener Method](#). That's available wherever books are sold. Instagram is probably the best place to follow me for tips, that's where I've been trying to concentrate right now. I'm [@slightlygreener](#) on Instagram.

Wendy Myers: Fantastic. Fantastic. Thank you so much for coming on the show. Are there any closing words or anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to communicate to the listeners?

Tonya Harris:

I think the biggest thing is my number one rule, no mom guilt, no parent guilt or self guilt. We've all done this stuff and used things on our kids or ourselves. Then when we find out this information, it can be really hard. Again, we're just doing the best we can. Once we learn this new information, we can use that in the way it fits into our lifestyle. Give ourselves grace, even if we want the occasional treat, but especially just not kicking ourselves when we find out this information, because it can be scary. Know that we have more control than we think we do.

Wendy Myers:

We all start our journey somewhere. It's never too late to get started. I kind of viewed this as like a fun project that I would do. I'd just go through one room in the house and work on that and learn what I needed to learn. Then I started myersdetox.com and there's tons of resources on there as well for you guys for recommended beauty products, how to make natural cleaners, and what all this stuff does to your body. All the research behind that and everything is on there. There's lots of free resources for you guys. Tonya, thanks so much for coming on the show.

Tonya Harris:

Thank you so much for having me.

Wendy Myers:

Everyone, thanks so much for tuning in every week to the *Myers Detox Podcast*. I love doing the show every week. I love interviewing experts like Tonya. I love teaching you guys every day. Thank you so much for tuning in. I appreciate your presence here. I'm Wendy Myers. You can learn more about my work at myersdetox.com. I'll talk to you guys very soon.