

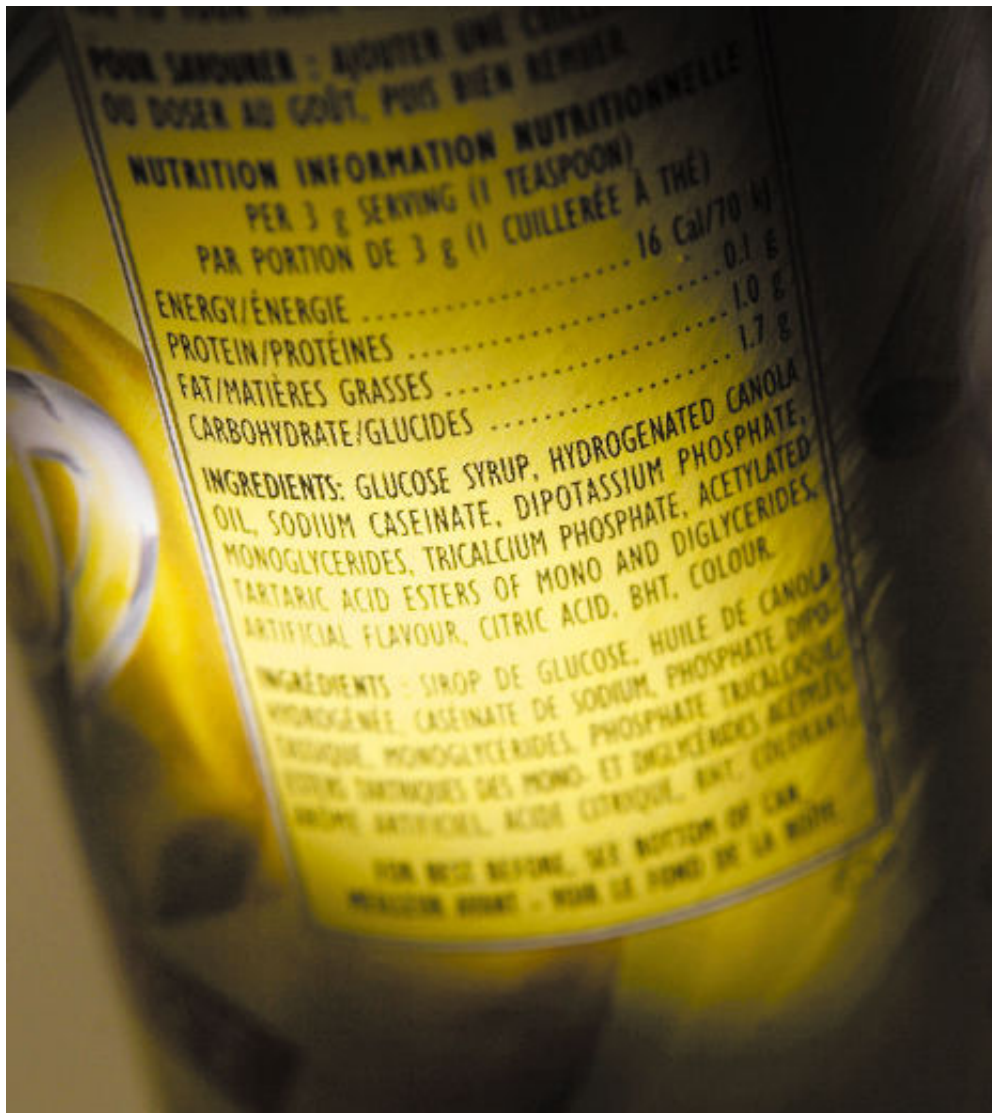


## LIFE

# How to clean your food of toxins



By Melissa Carr, Special to 24 hours  
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Know what's in your food before you eat it. FILE PHOTO

Researchers are now recruiting participants for a study on whether women of reproductive age, new to B.C. from South and East Asia, have higher levels of toxins that may affect the health of their future children. Called Study of Newcomer Women and Developmental Toxicants, it will involve an in-person survey and collection of blood and urine samples. For information about that, go to [www.bccdc.ca/seedstudy](http://www.bccdc.ca/seedstudy).

The motive for the study is that previous, smaller studies have shown women from countries in these areas have almost twice the level of heavy metals and other toxins as women born in Canada, and some of these toxicants can be passed to a fetus by the mother, potentially affecting growth and development. One reason why women born and raised in Canada have been found to have lower levels is that Canada has stricter regulations on contaminant usage.

Some of the possible contributors for a higher exposure of heavy metals like lead and mercury, along with a number of other toxins, include Cinnabar (a red powder that is high in mercury and is traditionally applied to the skin of married Hindu and Sikh women), imported candies, cosmetics (lead may be found in kohl eyeliner), diet (including large predatory fish), imported Ayurvedic herbs and teas, and traditional Chinese medicines and herbs.

Of course the pollutants may also affect both men and women directly, as they are linked to a wide range of health conditions, including cancer, fertility, and immune system disorders.

Whether you qualify for the study or not, limiting your exposure to heavy metals and other toxins is an important step toward better health. If you are taking an Ayurvedic or Chinese herbal medicine, quality is key. Canada has high quality control for natural health products, labeling them with a number — called NPN (Natural Product Number) — to assure you they are safe, effective, and of high quality under their recommended conditions of use. If you are buying something off a shelf in Canada, you can look for the NPN.

If you are seeking help from a qualified Traditional Chinese Medicine doctor or practitioner, you can also ask about quality. Many Chinese herbal products have been processed and packaged by companies that have third party testing for quality and safety.

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Thursday, May 28, 2015



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