

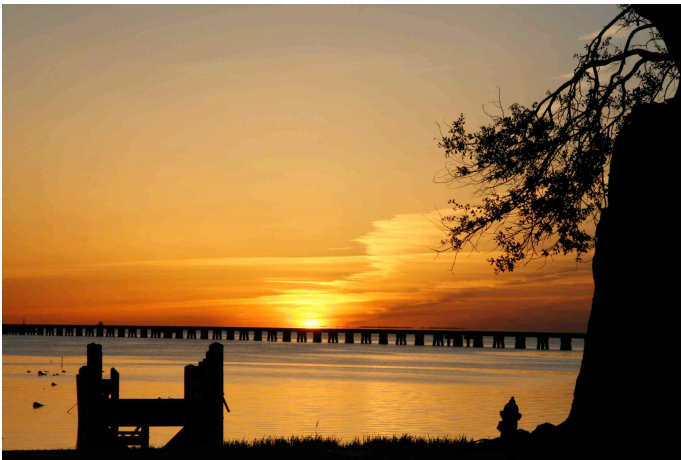
Living Healthy in and around Bay St. Louis, Mississippi

provided by **Coming Alongside**, an Environmental Services Organization

Confused? Overwhelmed? Frustrated?

... by all the messages coming your way about environmental health & your health?
We can help by Making it Simple & Making it Doable.

It is hard to believe that serious environmental health threats live side by side with the warmth and beauty that is the Bay St. Louis (and surrounding) community. Just like any other community in the United States, however, Bay St. Louis has been impacted by man-made activity in ways, known and unknown, that degrade human health, leading to both short term health problems and long term, chronic diseases, such as cancer. Hurricane Katrina made it all the more confusing by re-arranging pollutants. But .. **every resident** can choose **simple affordable changes** in everyday activity to drastically improve long term health & quality of life.



Who are we and What are we doing?

Coming Alongside is a non-profit environmental services organization, committed to combining the scientific literature and latest environmental data into understandable, customized, and actionable messages for all residents in the communities we serve. We are not affiliated with any federal or political organizations and remain an objective messenger to the people who live in areas impacted by environmental threat. We deliver our information in a “Top 5” format, where information and action are already prioritized, so that we do not overwhelm those that we serve with too much information, with too many calls to action.

What to Avoid: The Top 5

- **SMOKING** indoors: whether you are the smoker or not, second-hand smoke is especially toxic.
- **EATING SEAFOOD** from the Bay of St. Louis. Many shellfish and fish residing in the Bay are contaminated with toxic dioxins and furans.
- **BREATHING** solvents: from paints, stains, air fresheners, household cleaners, scented products.
- **INHALING** emissions from new building materials: Ventilate whenever possible.
- **TRACKING** dirt and soil into your home: remove shoes outside; sweep indoor spaces regularly.

What to Do: The Top 5

- **SWEAT, SWEAT, SWEAT:** perspiring removes environmental pollutants from tissues in the body.
- **DRINK** plenty of known good water: water dilutes the amount of toxin internalized by the body.
- **EAT** reduced or toxin free food as often as possible: fresh, washed, and/or organic fruits & veggies.
- **PREFER** eating foods that prevent short term health problems and long term, chronic diseases (for example: garlic for the lungs; tomatoes for cancer; onions for the liver --and many more fresh veggies/fruits!)
- **KNOW** your drinking water: what it looks like is not a good indicator of goodness or badness. Have your drinking water tested by the local water department. Purify as necessary.

Why?

- **SMOKING indoors:** second hand smoke has many of the same harmful chemicals in it as first-hand smoke (benzene, formaldehyde, carbon monoxide, ammonia ... to name only a few). Ventilation and air purifiers remove the smell but not the chemicals. Inhaling second hand smoke forces these harmful chemicals into the lungs, where they are then absorbed into the blood, the organs, and other body tissues. Concentrated second-hand smoke can produce health effects ranging from:
 - Short term: headache, dizziness, and nausea.
 - Moderate term: asthma and breathing difficulty.
 - Long term: stroke, lung, breast & cervical cancer; stroke, and respiratory disease.
 - Reproductive: sudden infant death syndrome, low birth weight, and miscarriage.
- **EATING SEAFOOD from the Bay of St. Louis:** shellfish, including oysters and shrimp from the Bay of St. Louis, have been tested in scientific studies and found to have toxic levels of dioxin and furan compounds. Dioxins and furans are generated by industrial processes and remain in the body fat for extremely long periods (decades) after consumption. Dioxins and furans have been proven to be most harmful in the ingestion of fish and shellfish, because marine animals concentrate these compounds before passing them on to the humans who eat them.
- **BREATHING solvents:** many of the non-food items we use and store in our homes and attached garages emit volatile and semi-volatile organic compounds that can have similar health effects to second hand smoke. The FDA does not regulate the ingredients in many of these products, which makes it harder to understand exact exposure levels for particularly toxins. Artificial air fresheners, scented candles, and other scented household products are to be avoided as they emit many of the same harmful volatile organic compounds as paints, stains & the like. Lemon & Pine scents are particularly toxic.
- **INHALING emissions from new building materials:** almost all new building materials (but especially those made of pressed board, particle board, or similar composite materials) emit semi-volatile and volatile organic compounds, including formaldehyde (which emits for the longest time). New homes and newly remodeled spaces should be ventilated as much as possible to release these toxins to outdoor air rather than concentrating them indoors.
- **TRACKING dirt and soil into your home:** surface soil can contain a wide variety of harmful chemicals, especially heavy metals that are either present in the workplace; aerosolized by nearby industrial processing plants and deposited on surface soil; or present in the soil as chronic (long-term) contamination. Children are especially vulnerable to consuming (ingesting) contaminated house dust and soils, making it especially important to keep soil from the outdoors away from the indoor environment.
- **SWEAT, SWEAT, SWEAT:** the skin is the best and largest source of detoxification in the human body. 30% of toxic waste is excreted through the skin. In order to remove toxic waste effectively, the body must be hydrated while sweating; otherwise toxic waste builds up inside the body and can lead to tumors and other poor health conditions. Increasing body temperature also neutralizes the impact of bacteria and other foreign invaders inside the body.
- **DRINK plenty of known good water:** water is 60% of the human body; it detoxifies the liver and kidneys and is a major player in removing waste from the body. Water also keeps blood from getting too thick, and keeps the brain active, concentration on target, and energy levels high.
- **EAT reduced or toxin free food as often as possible:** the Mayo Clinic Food & Nutrition Center <http://www.mayoclinic.com> (select healthy living) has a good introduction to what foods to avoid, which to embrace, and by how much.
- **PREFER eating foods that prevent health problems:** when exposed to known carcinogens, phytochemicals are believed to fight off impending cancers. Popular foods that contain a variety of phytochemicals include onions, garlic, tomatoes, carrots, beans, oranges, whole wheat, brown rice, basil, & green tea.
- **KNOW your drinking water:** most harmful water does not look cloudy, taste badly, or smell funny. Boiling water that is chemically contaminated can make it more harmful by concentrating the chemicals, while boiling water that is biologically contaminated kills bacteria and removes the threat. Because the composition of drinking water can be so complicated, it is important to know what potential threats are present in the water you drink. The local public water department usually knows what the most likely threats are and can test drinking water for you. Be sure to ask questions, about what is in the water and how to purify it.