

Start *Here.*

The household swaps I'd make first — before a single supplement or prescription.

A free field guide from **Dawn Philp, FNP** & The Wellness Co.

WHY THIS COMES BEFORE THE PHARMACY

Patients ask me all the time where to begin — especially the ones who don't have a spare few hundred dollars a month for labs, hormones, and a cabinet full of supplements. My honest answer surprises them: **don't start by adding anything. Start by removing.**

Your body is already doing the work of an optimization program every single day. It's just spending that energy processing what comes in through your pan, your laundry, your air, and your tap. Much of that load is optional. The chemicals we're talking about — the ones that mimic hormones, irritate airways, and quietly tax your liver — ride in on ordinary products you can swap for something better, often for free or for a few dollars.

None of this replaces medicine, and none of it is about fear or perfection. It's about lightening the daily burden so that when you *are* ready to invest in your

health, your body has less noise to overcome.

And I've tried to go *past the obvious* here. You already know about plastic water bottles and scented candles. Some of the highest-leverage swaps are the quieter ones — the tea bag, the dental floss, the shower head — that rarely make it onto anyone's feed. This is where I'd tell my own family to begin.

If you only do five things

Overwhelmed? Start with these five. They cost little or nothing — and if you've been at this a while, a couple will still be new.

- 1 **Reheat on the stovetop, not the microwave.** I skip the microwave entirely — one small pan does the job.
- 2 **Soak in magnesium.** My go-to — a warm Epsom-salt bath or foot soak a few nights a week. Most of us run low on magnesium, and it's a cheap, calming way to wind down before bed.
- 3 **Learn one label word — "fragrance."** It legally hides dozens of chemicals, and "unscented" is *not* the same as fragrance-free.
- 4 **Wash produce in a baking-soda bath.** A 15-minute soak (about 1 tsp per 2 cups water) strips far more surface pesticide than a quick rinse under the tap.
- 5 **Switch to a fluoride-free toothpaste.** I feel strongly about this one — reach for nano-hydroxyapatite, the mineral enamel is actually made of.

A WALK THROUGH YOUR HOME

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01 The Kitchen

Where the most swaps live — because heat, food, and plastic are a bad combination, and this is the room where they meet three times a day.

Nonstick cookware → Stainless steel & cast iron

● DITCH

Scratched or aging nonstick (Teflon / PTFE) pans. Once the coating chips, it flakes into food and releases fumes when overheated.

● SWAP TO

Stainless steel for everyday cooking, cast iron for searing. Both last decades.

FREE · USE IT UP FIRST

INVEST · \$30–80 A PAN

Why it matters: Nonstick coatings are part of the PFAS family — "forever chemicals" linked to hormone and metabolic disruption. A well-seasoned cast iron pan is naturally nonstick and adds a little dietary iron.

My tip: You don't have to replace everything at once. Retire the worst pan today, cook eggs in cast iron, and phase the rest out as your budget allows.

Plastic food storage → Glass

● DITCH

Storing hot, oily, or acidic food in plastic tubs, and covering food with cling film. Heat and fat pull plasticizers straight into what you eat.

● SWAP TO

Glass containers with lids — even saved glass jars work. Keep old plastic for non-food storage.

FREE · REUSE GLASS JARS

CHEAP · GLASS SET ~\$25

Why it matters: BPA and phthalates from plastics are endocrine disruptors — they mimic estrogen in the body. Heat and fat are the biggest release triggers, so hot leftovers going straight into a plastic tub is a daily, avoidable dose.

My tip: Let food cool before it goes into any container, and let go of the "matching lids" cabinet — a shelf of clean glass jars does the same job for free.

The microwave → The stovetop

● DITCH

I go a step past the usual advice: retire the microwave altogether. Beyond the plastic-and-heat problem, it's the lazy default that keeps plastic tubs in the daily rotation.

● SWAP TO

Reheat on the stovetop in a stainless pan or small pot — or the oven / toaster oven. Two minutes, one pan to wash.

FREE · USE WHAT YOU OWN

Why it matters: Stovetop reheating removes the single worst plastic-meets-heat moment in most kitchens, and food genuinely tastes better out of a pan. If you keep the microwave, the rule is non-negotiable: **never** heat food in plastic — move it to glass or a ceramic plate first.

My tip: A splash of water or broth in the pot keeps soups and leftovers from sticking. Within a week you'll stop reaching for plastic containers out of habit.

Plastic utensils & boards → Wood & steel

● DITCH

Black plastic spatulas and plastic cutting boards that shed into hot pans and get scored with every cut.

● SWAP TO

Wood or stainless utensils; a solid wood cutting board.

CHEAP · A FEW DOLLARS EACH

Why it matters: Two problems, one swap. Recycled black-plastic tools have tested positive for flame retardants — and a plastic cutting board sheds microplastics with every slice; one study estimated tens of millions of particles a year ending up in food. Wood is naturally antibacterial and lasts for decades.

My tip: Rub a wood board with a little food-grade mineral oil now and then and it'll outlast every plastic board you've ever owned.

Plastic tea bags → Loose-leaf

● DITCH

Standard tea bags — most are heat-sealed with polypropylene, and the "silky" pyramid bags are often plastic outright.

● SWAP TO

Loose-leaf tea with a stainless steel infuser, or bags certified plastic-free (unbleached paper, no heat-seal).

CHEAP · INFUSER ~\$8

Why it matters: A single plastic tea bag steeped in near-boiling water can release *billions* of microplastic and nanoplastic particles into one cup — all in the name of a "healthy" drink. This is the swap almost nobody thinks about.

02 Salt, Oils & the Pantry

A few staples do a lot of quiet work. Upgrading them costs pennies per meal and touches everything you cook.

Table salt → Real mineral salt

● DITCH

Standard iodized table salt — stripped, bleached, and cut with anti-caking agents.

● SWAP TO

An unrefined, **land-mined** mineral salt — Redmond Real Salt, or a Himalayan brand that publishes its testing.

CHEAP · LASTS FOR MONTHS

Why it matters: Land-mined salts come from ancient buried deposits, so they carry roughly **ten times fewer microplastics** than ocean-evaporated sea salts (Celtic and most "sea salt") — and unlike stripped table salt, they keep the trace minerals your body actually uses. The source, not the color, is what matters.

The "lead in salt" scare, honestly: You've probably seen the posts. Yes, natural salts contain trace lead — *all* of them do, because "unrefined" means trace minerals and trace metals arrive together. But a normal day's worth of salt delivers a tiny fraction of the FDA's adult safety benchmark, the viral claim measures it against a *proposed baby-food* limit, and the brand most often named actually tests *lower* for lead than the sea salt people run to. Choose land-mined and transparent, and move on.

Industrial seed oils → Stable fats

● DITCH

Canola, soybean, corn, and "vegetable" oil for cooking — highly processed and prone to oxidizing under heat.

● SWAP TO

Extra-virgin olive oil for finishing, avocado oil for high heat, butter, ghee, or tallow.

CHEAP → INVEST · VARIES

Why it matters: Oxidized seed oils are a source of inflammatory compounds. Naturally stable fats hold up to heat and keep you satisfied longer.

Artificial dyes & "fragrance" foods → Whole ingredients

● DITCH

Brightly dyed snacks, drinks, and cereals (Red 40, Yellow 5) and "natural flavor" catch-alls.

● SWAP TO

Foods with ingredient lists you can read. If a color looks unnatural, it usually is.

FREE · READ THE LABEL

Why it matters: Synthetic dyes are linked to behavioral and attention effects in kids and offer zero nutritional value. This one costs nothing but attention.

Conventional oats & grains → Organic

● DITCH

Conventional oats, wheat, and legumes. Many non-organic grain and bean crops are sprayed with glyphosate as a pre-harvest drying agent — right before they're bagged.

● SWAP TO

Certified organic oats, flour, and legumes, where pre-harvest glyphosate desiccation isn't permitted.

CHEAP · SMALL PRICE BUMP

Why it matters: Glyphosate residue turns up repeatedly in testing of popular conventional oat products. Buying organic for the grains and legumes you eat *most often* is a targeted, budget-minded way to cut a residue most people never think about.

03 The Meat You Choose

Protein anchors most plates, and the quality of the animal becomes the quality of your food. This is where "cheap" and "healthy" can genuinely line up — if you know the cuts.

Grain-finished meat → Grass-fed *and* grass-finished

● DITCH

Conventional feedlot meat — and the marketing trap of "grass-fed" that's quietly *grain-finished* in the last months.

● SWAP TO

100% **grass-fed and grass-finished** beef, bison, or lamb; pasture-raised poultry and pork; wild-caught fish.

CHEAP · GROUND & BULK CUTS

INVEST · QUARTER COW / CUTS

Why it matters: Nearly all cattle start on grass, so "grass-fed" alone means little — "**grass-finished**" is the phrase that counts. Fully pasture-raised meat has a better fat profile (more omega-3s), and skips the feedlot's routine antibiotics and added hormones. Toxins concentrate in fat, so the fat you eat is worth getting right.

My tip: You don't need the ribeye. Grass-finished **ground beef** is the affordable workhorse, and buying a quarter- or half-cow from a local rancher often costs *less* per pound than the grocery store. Check your farmers market.

Synthetic multivitamin → Whole-food organ blends

● DITCH

Leaning on a synthetic multivitamin — or skipping the single most nutrient-dense food there is.

● SWAP TO

Grass-fed liver and other organs, or a freeze-dried **organ blend** (liver, heart) in capsule form if the taste isn't for you.

CHEAP · FRESH LIVER AT THE BUTCHER

INVEST · ORGAN CAPSULES

Why it matters: Liver is nature's multivitamin — bioavailable B12, folate, vitamin A, iron, and copper in a form your body recognizes. A grass-fed organ complex is a whole-food alternative to a lab-made pill. Source organs from grass-fed, pasture-raised animals, since the liver is the filter.

My tip: Start small — a serving or two a week. Organs are rich in vitamin A and copper, so a little goes a long way. If you're pregnant or managing a condition, check with your provider on vitamin A first.

04 The Air You Breathe

You breathe roughly 20,000 times a day. Indoor air is often more polluted than outdoor air — and "smelling nice" is usually the culprit.

Synthetic candles & plug-ins → Clean air

● DITCH

Paraffin candles, plug-in air fresheners, and aerosol sprays. "Fragrance" can hide dozens of undisclosed chemicals.

● SWAP TO

Open windows daily, a beeswax or 100% soy candle, or an essential-oil diffuser for scent.

FREE · OPEN A WINDOW

CHEAP · DIFFUSER ~\$20

Why it matters: Fragranced products release VOCs and phthalates that don't have to be listed on the label. The word "fragrance" is a legal loophole — it can stand in for a long list of undisclosed ingredients.

My tip: This is the swap patients feel fastest — headaches, congestion, and "stuffy house" symptoms often ease within days of clearing the air.

Stale indoor air → Circulation & plants

● DITCH

Sealing the house up year-round and masking odors with more fragrance.

● SWAP TO

Cross-ventilate a few minutes a day, run bathroom/kitchen fans, add a few houseplants.

FREE

CHEAP · PLANTS

Why it matters: Simply moving air out dilutes everything that's accumulated indoors — cooking byproducts, off-gassing furniture, cleaning residue.

Letting dust settle → Damp-dust & shoes off

● DITCH

Dry-dusting (which just relaunches it into the air) and wearing outdoor shoes through the house.

● SWAP TO

Damp-wipe surfaces, vacuum with a HEPA filter, and leave shoes at the door.

FREE

Why it matters: Household dust is where flame retardants, phthalates, and tracked-in lead and lawn chemicals quietly collect — and it's a major route by which they get into us, especially kids and pets on the floor. Managing dust is one of the most evidence-backed, least glamorous ways to lower your load. Nobody's making it look pretty online, but it works.

05 The Laundry Room

Whatever you wash your clothes and sheets in sits against your skin for hours — and your skin absorbs it.

Conventional detergent → Fragrance-free clean detergent

● DITCH

Heavily scented detergents and "spring fresh" boosters loaded with fragrance and optical brighteners.

● SWAP TO

A fragrance-free, dye-free detergent (look for short ingredient lists and third-party ratings).

CHEAP · SAME PRICE TIER

Why it matters: Fragrance and residues stay in the fabric and transfer to skin all day and all night on your sheets. Fragrance-free is often the same price — it's a swap, not an upsell.

Dryer sheets → Wool dryer balls

● DITCH

Single-use dryer sheets and liquid fabric softener — a heavy fragrance-and-coating source.

● SWAP TO

Reusable wool dryer balls. They soften and cut drying time; add a drop of essential oil if you want scent.

CHEAP · ~\$12, LAST FOR YEARS

Why it matters: Fabric softeners coat fibers in fragrance chemicals that then sit against skin. Wool balls do the mechanical job without the chemistry — and pay for themselves fast.

06 The Cleaning Cabinet

You don't need a dozen specialty sprays. A few simple staples clean almost everything — for a fraction of the cost.

A spray for every surface → Three simple staples

● DITCH

The cabinet full of scented, single-purpose sprays with warning labels and "fragrance" near the top.

● SWAP TO

Distilled white vinegar, castile soap, and baking soda cover most jobs. Add a fragrance-free all-purpose cleaner for convenience.

FREE · USE WHAT'S IN THE PANTRY

CHEAP · SAVES MONEY

Why it matters: Cleaning-product residue lingers on counters and in the air you breathe. Simple swaps cut the chemical load and are usually *cheaper* than what they replace — this is a rare swap that saves money immediately.

My tip: Skip vinegar on natural stone (granite/marble). For those, plain water and a fragrance-free stone-safe cleaner.

07 The Bathroom

Personal care goes directly onto the largest organ you have. You don't have to overhaul it overnight — swap items as they run out.

"Fragrance" everything → Read three lines of the label

● DITCH

Body wash, lotion, and deodorant where *fragrance, parabens, or phthalates* appear on the label.

● SWAP TO

Fragrance-free or naturally scented versions of the same products. Replace as each one runs out.

FREE · FINISH, THEN SWAP

CHEAP · COMPARABLE PRICE

Why it matters: Parabens and phthalates are among the most studied endocrine disruptors, and they're in products you apply daily and leave on. Because skin absorbs, "leave-on" products (lotion, deodorant) matter more than "rinse-off" ones — prioritize those first.

My tip: Don't throw out a full cabinet — that's waste and expense you don't need. Swap the leave-on products first, then the rest as they empty.

Fluoride toothpaste → Fluoride-free hydroxyapatite

● DITCH

Fluoride toothpaste — along with the artificial dyes, SLS, and "fragrance" that usually ride with it. This is one I feel strongly about: you swallow a little every time you brush, twice a day, for life.

● SWAP TO

A **nano-hydroxyapatite** toothpaste — the same mineral your enamel is actually made of.

INVEST · A FEW DOLLARS MORE

Why it matters: Hydroxyapatite isn't just a "fluoride-free" version of the same tube — it has decades of use in Japan and a solid research base for remineralizing enamel and easing sensitivity, so you're not trading away cavity protection to skip the fluoride. (Tellingly, one popular "clean" toothpaste on this very list got bought by a toothpaste giant — see the companion brand guide.)

"Glide" floss → PFAS-free floss

● DITCH

The slick PTFE "glide" floss that slips between teeth so easily. That slipperiness *is* a fluorinated coating — the same PFAS chemistry as a nonstick pan.

● SWAP TO

Silk or PFAS-free floss, usually coated in candelilla or beeswax instead.

CHEAP · SAME PRICE

Why it matters: Research has linked regular use of PTFE-based floss to higher PFAS levels in the body. You run it along your gumline every day — one of the easiest forever-chemical sources to quietly remove.

Grabbing paper receipts → Decline or wash up

● DITCH

Taking glossy paper receipts — especially right after hand sanitizer. Thermal receipt paper is coated in BPA/BPS, and sanitizer helps your skin absorb it.

● SWAP TO

Say "no receipt" or go digital. If you must take one, don't sanitize just before, and wash your hands after.

FREE

Why it matters: BPS and BPA are endocrine disruptors, and thermal paper delivers them straight through the skin. It's a zero-cost habit that almost no "clean living" list mentions.

Conventional period products → Organic cotton

● DITCH

Conventional tampons and pads — frequently made from heavily-sprayed cotton plus fragrance and synthetic materials.

● SWAP TO

Certified organic-cotton tampons and pads, or a medical-grade silicone menstrual cup.

CHEAP → INVEST

Why it matters: This is some of the most absorptive tissue in the body, in contact for hours at a time. Fragrance and pesticide residue are the last things you want there — and it's rarely part of the swaps conversation.

08 What Comes Out of the Tap

You drink it, cook with it, and shower in it every day. A basic filter is one of the best-value upgrades in the house.

Unfiltered tap & plastic bottles → Filtered water in glass or steel

● DITCH

Straight tap water for drinking and cooking, plus cases of single-use plastic bottles (especially ones left in a hot car).

● SWAP TO

A carbon pitcher or faucet filter to start; a reusable glass or stainless bottle you refill.

CHEAP · PITCHER ~\$30

INVEST · UNDER-SINK LATER

Why it matters: Even a basic carbon filter reduces chlorine, some heavy metals, and other contaminants. And every reusable bottle you refill is plastic you're no longer drinking from — bottled water is a major source of microplastics.

My tip: Start with a pitcher; upgrade to an under-sink or whole-house filter when the budget's there. Progress beats perfection.

Unfiltered showers → A shower-head filter

● DITCH

Showering in unfiltered municipal water. Nearly everyone filters what they drink and completely forgets the bigger daily exposure — a hot shower.

● SWAP TO

A carbon/KDF shower-head filter to cut chlorine and chloramine. Swap the cartridge every few months.

CHEAP · ~\$30

Why it matters: Hot water opens your pores and flashes chlorine into a vapor you breathe in — so a single shower can be a larger chlorine exposure than a glass of tap water. It's the water swap nobody talks about, and skin and hair usually notice within a week.

Who really owns your "healthy" brand?

You can do everything right and still get quietly downgraded.

Here's a pattern worth knowing: a founder builds a genuinely clean, mission-driven brand. It earns trust. Then a large corporation buys it — and over the next year or two, the formula changes. Cheaper oils appear. Fillers creep in. "Fragrance" shows up on the label. The certifications get quieter. The packaging looks the same, so most people never notice.

Here's the part that stings: a number of the "health" brands people reach for are **no longer privately owned at all**. They were bought out by the very food, personal-care, and pharmaceutical conglomerates you were trying to get away from in the first place. The label still reads small and wholesome — the owner is anything but.

*You pick the "clean" brand to sidestep the big corporation. More and more often, **they're the same company.***

That's not a reason for paranoia — it's a reason to buy with your eyes open.

- ✓ **Favor independent, founder-owned brands.** Companies that answer to their customers, not shareholders, have every reason to keep their formula honest.
- ✓ **Re-read labels you already trust.** Ingredient creep is real. If a product changed after an acquisition, your loyalty can change too.

- ✓ **Go closer to the source.** Local ranchers, farmers markets, and small direct-to-you makers often beat the big "natural" labels on both quality and price.
- ✓ **Vote with your dollar.** The independent brands you keep buying from are the ones that get to *stay* independent.

My tip: We keep a running short-list of independent brands we still trust — and update it as ownership and formulas change. When you're in, just ask.

HOW TO DO THIS ON ANY BUDGET

You don't need money — you need an order of operations.

Almost every swap in this guide falls into one of three tiers. Do the free ones today. They cost nothing and carry most of the benefit.

FREE · DO TODAY

Stop & change habits

Never microwave plastic, open a window, read labels, retire the worst pan, skip the candle. Zero dollars.

UNDER \$25 · THIS MONTH

Small purchases

Wool dryer balls, a glass container set, a water pitcher, mineral salt, a diffuser. High impact, low cost.

INVEST · WHEN READY

Replace as you go

Stainless/cast iron pans, a better water filter, fragrance-free personal care — swapped in as things wear out.

IF YOU TAKE MEDICATIONS

What might your prescriptions

be quietly draining?

Some common — and important — medications can lower certain nutrients over time. This is *not* a reason to stop anything; your medication may be doing exactly its job. But it's worth knowing, because a quiet nutrient gap can look and feel like a brand-new symptom. Find yours below, then bring it to your provider.

IF YOU TAKE...	IT CAN LOWER...
Metformin blood sugar	Vitamin B12
Acid reducers PPIs like omeprazole, and H2 blockers	Vitamin B12; magnesium
Loop diuretics furosemide / Lasix	Potassium, magnesium, thiamine (B1)
Thiazide diuretics HCTZ	Potassium, magnesium
Long-term corticosteroids prednisone	Calcium & vitamin D (bone health)
Low-dose methotrexate rheumatoid arthritis / psoriasis	Folate — folic acid is usually prescribed alongside
Anti-seizure medications phenytoin, carbamazepine	Vitamin D, folate
Cholesterol bile-acid binders cholestyramine	Vitamins A, D, E & K
Statins cholesterol	CoQ10 — see the note below

About statins & CoQ10: statins genuinely lower circulating CoQ10 — that part isn't disputed. Whether taking a CoQ10 supplement actually relieves statin-related muscle aches is still debated (strong studies disagree, and the NIH's own consumer guidance says the evidence doesn't yet

support it). It's low-risk and some people feel better on it, so it's a reasonable thing to trial *with* your provider — just not a guaranteed fix. That honesty is the point: we'd rather tell you what's settled and what isn't.

Handle with care — where "just take the supplement" is the wrong move

A few combinations are the opposite of a simple top-up: adding the nutrient can actually backfire. These are conversations for your prescriber, never DIY.

- **Blood thinners (warfarin) + vitamin K:** vitamin K is the exact thing warfarin works against. Don't add it, and don't suddenly change how many leafy greens you eat — keep your intake *steady*.
- **Thyroid meds (levothyroxine) + calcium or iron:** those minerals block the medication when taken together. Separate them by about 4 hours — it's a timing issue, not a shortage.
- **ACE inhibitors / ARBs (the "-pril" and "-sartan" drugs) + potassium:** these medications *raise* your potassium. Don't add potassium supplements or potassium-based salt substitutes without your prescriber — it can be genuinely dangerous.
- **Folic acid + vitamin B12:** high-dose folate can hide a B12 deficiency while the nerve damage quietly continues. Check B12 *first* — especially if you're on metformin or an acid reducer.

Please read before you change anything. This is general education, not medical advice. A lower number on a lab isn't automatically a deficiency, and the right response depends on your dose, your labs, and everything else you take. **Don't start, stop, or change any supplement or prescription based on this page.** Look yours up, then talk with your provider or pharmacist — this is exactly the kind of thing we map from your labs and full medication list at The Wellness Co., so nothing is a guess.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GO DEEPER

You've cleared the noise. Now let's read the signal.

Reducing your daily load is step one — it's free, and it works. When you're ready to understand what's actually happening inside your body, that's what we do at The Wellness Co. Our CLARITY program starts with your labs and my interpretation, so your next steps are personal, not guesswork.

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Or start with a free lab review at urwellness.co · (619) 444-3264

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