

Using Power Strips to Lower EMF Exposures

by Andrew Eriksen

Power strips can be used to lower exposures to a lot of EMF sources in the home.

- The freezer and refrigerator can be turned off from a distance, before approaching, by connecting them to a power strip. Just remember to turn them back on again.
- Instead of cooking with an electric stove, use a set of portable hot plates on a power strip. Turn them off before tending the pots, and on again when stepping back.
- Most electronic equipment – such as computers, televisions, satellite receivers and stereos – are not completely off, even with the power button in the off position. To eliminate these EMF sources, put all electronics on power strips.
- Electric space heaters can also be turned on remotely, using a power strip.
- Electric water heaters typically cannot be controlled by a power strip, as they run mostly on 220 volt. An electrician can install a special switch. Using a timer is another option.

Be aware that some surge protectors radiate high-frequency EMF. Put an AM radio next to one to find out. Choose a power strip with metal housing. This avoids another piece of plastic in the house, and the metal also shields some of the EMF from the wires inside. (In a cable, the two wires run next to each other and largely cancel each other's EMF fields. Inside a power strip, they run about 1/2 inch from each other.)

Metal power strips can often be found at hardware stores and building supply centers. One brand is Tripp-Lite, which also is available by mail order (such as Digi-Key, 1-800-344-4539, www.digikey.com).