

TOXIC FREE

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND HOME
FROM THE CHEMICALS THAT ARE MAKING YOU SICK

- Find out how toxic chemicals in consumer products affect your health



- Save money on the rapidly rising cost of health care

FIND AND ELIMINATE THE TOXIC CHEMICALS IN YOUR
HOME THAT ARE HARMING YOUR FAMILY TODAY,
from *The New York Times*' "Queen of Green"!

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Bodies Collect and Store Toxic Chemicals

There is such a huge volume of toxic chemicals in the world today that there are far more than our bodies were designed to handle.

When your body's detox system is insufficient to remove the amount of toxic chemicals you are exposed to—and this applies to virtually everyone alive today—then the toxicants that come into your body will not be excreted, but instead will be stored in your body: in fat, semen, breast milk, muscles, bones, the brain, the liver, and other organs.

The total amount of these chemicals that are being stored in your body at a given point in time is called your *body burden*.

Various chemicals move through your body at different rates. Arsenic, for example, is mostly excreted within seventy-two hours of exposure. Some pesticides can remain in your body for fifty years.

Of course, how quickly chemicals are removed from your body depends on the condition of your body's detoxification system and the amount of toxic chemicals you are exposed to.

When you are continuously exposed to toxic chemicals—as most people are every day—more toxic chemicals enter the body than can be removed by your detoxification system, and body burden results.

Scientists say that everyone alive today is contaminated with at least seven hundred toxic chemicals in their bodies. It doesn't matter where you live or what you do. Just being on this planet, every body is contaminated.

EPA biopsies of human fat show:

- We all have polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in our bodies, from adhesives, carbonless copy paper, dyes, fluorescent light ballasts, inks, paints, pesticides, plastics, and many other consumer products. No longer manufactured or widely used since 1977, PCBs are still widespread in the environment. Currently our most significant exposure is in fish.
- We all have styrene in our bodies from Styrofoam coffee cups and takeout food containers.
- We all have dichlorobenzene in our bodies from breathing fumes from air fresheners, mothballs, and toilet-deodorizer blocks.
- We all have xylene in our bodies from breathing gasoline, paint varnish, shellac, rust preventatives, permanent markers, and cigarette smoke.
- We all have dioxins in our bodies. The major sources of dioxin are in our diet. Since dioxin is fat-soluble, it bioaccumulates, climbing up the food chain. A North American eating a typical North American diet will receive 93 percent of their dioxin exposure from meat and dairy products (23 percent is from milk and dairy alone; other large sources of exposure are beef, fish, pork, poultry, and eggs). In fish, these toxicants bioaccumulate up the food chain so that dioxin levels in fish are 100,000 times that of the surrounding environment.
- All these chemicals cause cancer as well as other illnesses.

All these chemicals and more are known to be stockpiled in everyone's bodies *unless you have done something to remove them*. (I'll discuss more about how you reduce your body burden by removing stored toxic chemicals in Chapter 4.)

Just how contaminated are our bodies in our current industrialized environment, compared to what it would be if the planet were not polluted with industrial chemicals?

An examination was done of lead in the bones of Peruvians buried

1,600 years ago. The Peruvian bones were compared to lead found in the bones of present-day residents of the United Kingdom and the United States. The amount of lead in the bones of present day human bodies is 1,000 times the amount found in the bones of ancient Peruvians.

That your body stores toxic chemicals is a good thing, because it keeps the chemicals from circulating through your body in your bloodstream and creating toxic effects. However, it's better to not hold on to those toxicants.

Your body has the ability to alter toxic chemicals to increase or decrease—or totally change—their effects. What makes toxic effects so unpredictable is that chemicals inside your body can react with other chemicals that enter your body at the same time, or that have already entered and been stored. A well-known example is alcoholic beverages and tranquilizers, but reactions can also occur between a cleaning product and a pesticide or even something as seemingly insignificant as a food additive. Carrying around past toxic exposures in your body, which can be released at any time, just increases your chances of toxic health problems.

Since 2001, the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has produced four reports called the *National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals* (www.cdc.gov/exposurereport). These are a series of ongoing assessments of the U.S. population's exposure to environmental chemicals by measuring chemicals in a person's blood or urine, a process called biomonitoring. Biomonitoring results help CDC scientists find out what chemicals enter a person's body and at what concentration. The results also help scientists learn about the general population's exposure to certain chemicals.

The *Fourth National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals 2009* is the most comprehensive assessment to date of the exposure of the U.S. population to chemicals in our environment. Some 212 chemicals were found in about 2,400 people tested.

The report's Executive Summary gives these findings regarding chemicals found in the bodies of Americans:

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers are fire retardants used in certain manufactured products. These accumulate in the environment and in human fat tissue. One type of polybrominated diphenyl ether, BDE-47, was found in the serum of nearly all of the NHANES participants.

Bisphenol A (BPA), a component of epoxy resins and polycarbonates, may have potential reproductive toxicity. General population exposure to BPA may occur through ingestion of foods in contact with BPA-containing materials. CDC scientists found bisphenol A in more than 90% of the urine samples representative of the U.S. population.

Another example of widespread human exposure included several of the perfluorinated chemicals. One of these chemicals, perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), was a by-product of the synthesis of other perfluorinated chemicals and was a synthesis aid in the manufacture of a commonly used polymer, polytetrafluoroethylene, which is used to create heat-resistant non-stick coatings in cookware. Most participants had measurable levels of this environmental contaminant.

It is bad enough that these chemicals each individually are known to be hazardous to health. What is worse is that the dangers of exposure to these chemicals *in combination* has never been studied.

Toxics Contribute to Every Illness

Do you know someone who has been poisoned?

How about someone who currently has cancer or has died of cancer?

Do you know a couple that has not been able to conceive a child?

Anyone with diabetes or who is overweight?

How about anyone with chronic headaches or insomnia?

All of these conditions—and more—can be the result of exposure to toxic industrial chemicals.

Chances are, not only do you know people who have been made sick by toxic chemicals, but you yourself are suffering to some degree from exposure to toxic chemicals.

When I started researching toxic chemicals in consumer products we use at home in 1978, the field of toxicology barely existed. The first toxicology textbook wasn't written until 1971, and the first professional organization to certify toxicologists wasn't formed until 1979.

Today, more than a quarter of a century later, our knowledge of toxic chemicals and their health effects have changed dramatically. Studies now exist that show *toxic chemical exposure underlies virtually every symptom and illness*.

Two excellent websites to visit to find these studies are:

- Scorecard (www.scorecard.org/health-effects/index.tcl)
- The Collaborative on Health and the Environment (www.healthandenvironment.org/tddb/)

There is so much evidence that the toxic chemicals we encounter in our everyday exposures result in common diseases that I encourage all health care professionals—both conventional and alternative—to learn more about the associations between toxic exposures and illness, and to consider handling these exposures as a basic part of treatment.

In the health care world today, the primary focus is on symptoms. We experience a symptom, and then look for a remedy. Whether that remedy is a drug from a doctor or an herb from the natural-food store, we think in terms of finding a cure for signs and symptoms.

But there is another way to look at it. There are basic, core things that contribute to health, including adequate nutrition, exercise, sunlight, and other factors. When these life-supporting factors are present, the result is health. When they are not, illness results. Toxic chemical exposure is part of core wellness. When your body is exposed to toxicants, they can damage health throughout your body, and when you are free of these exposures, health happens; in fact, addressing toxic exposures nowadays is *necessary* for health to occur.

From my viewpoint, toxic chemicals are not just *a* major contributor to ill health, they are *the* major contributor to ill health. They are so widespread and cause such havoc in a body that toxic exposures should be among the first things considered and handled as part of creating a good foundation of health. Today, more and more health care professionals agree.

I am encouraged to see that over the thirty years during which I have been researching and writing on this subject, the trend is toward more and more awareness of how toxic exposures impact our health. We have the data. The associations have been made. We now need to integrate this knowledge into our health care practices.

But you don't need to wait for professional services or government regulations to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals. You can yourself choose to be toxic-free. And you can encourage your own doctor and other health care professionals you see to learn more about how toxic exposures might be contributing to your own less-than-optimum or poor body conditions.

Poisons can affect every part of your body. For details on how toxic chemicals can affect each of your body systems, see Appendix A: How Toxins Affect Your Body Systems.

You Can Be Toxic-Free

The reason toxics are a health problem today is simple:

- We are exposed to too many toxic chemicals.
- Our bodies have too little capacity to eliminate the huge amounts of toxics we are exposed to.

To be healthy in today's toxic world, you need to:

- reduce the amount of your toxic exposures
- increase the ability of your body to process and eliminate toxic chemicals.



Reduce
your toxic exposure



Increase
your body's ability
to eliminate toxics

You can do something about this.

You will find out how to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products you use at home in Chapter 2, and how to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment in Chapter 3.

Then you will learn how to increase your body's ability to eliminate toxics in Chapter 4.

So read on. . . .

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