

Problematic “P’s” Fact Sheet

Many toxins used in our everyday world have the potential to harm health and may cause: cancers; asthma and other breathing disorders; birth defects and infertility; Multiple Chemical Sensitivity; Allergies; Parkinson’s, and numerous other health problems. The “Problematic P’s” are the most pervasive toxins.

Pesticides

Pesticides were manufactured to “kill” and are not selective about what they kill. They are capable of causing numerous health disorders and diseases. The “pesticide” category includes: herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, and rodenticides.

All labels that claim a product kills germs or disinfects contains pesticides and ***MUST, BY LAW, BE REGISTERED with the U.S. EPA Pesticide Division.*** Products may include antimicrobials, deodorizers, sanitizers, anti fungal products, disinfectants, household cleaning products, and lawn care products. **Read all labels!** The EPA Registration Number on the label does not mean the product has been approved by the EPA, only the label and warnings have been approved.

The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) mandates pesticide manufacturers to report all adverse health incidents caused by their products to the U.S. EPA Pesticide Division.

The Veteran’s Administration has expanded benefits to qualified Veterans for 14 medical conditions caused by exposure to Agent Orange (a herbicide). These conditions include: Type 2 diabetes, peripheral neuropathy, leukemia, Hodgkin’s Disease, Ischemic Heart Disease, Parkinson’s, Prostate and other cancers.

Home and garden pesticide use may increase the risk of childhood leukemia by almost seven times. (Journal of the National Cancer Institute, 79:39 (1987). The application of pesticides pollutes the air and affects our water quality.

Pharmaceuticals

Physiologically, there may be no difference between “street drugs” and prescription pharmaceuticals. Both can cause harm to health and death.

Pharmaceutical drugs contain potentially toxic ingredients and may contain other harmful products including dyes, preservatives, fillers, and incipients which may interact with other prescription and over-the-counter drugs, foods, or other products and result in severe and life threatening adverse health effects.

Most drugs, including birth control pills, hormonal chemicals, antibiotics, and anti-depressants cannot be entirely filtered out of our drinking water supplies. Don’t flush pharmaceuticals down the toilet. Contact your hospital or local law enforcement officials to learn where you can take them for safe disposal.

Perfume and Other Fragrances

Benzene, toluene, phenols, styrene and other toxic chemicals are included in the list of 3,194 materials fragrance is made from (International Fragrance Association website has a complete and eye-opening list). Approximately 95% of the ingredients in perfumes are derived from petrochemicals.

Fragrance chemicals may trigger numerous health issues including asthma and other breathing disorders, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity, sinus infection and congestion, and cancer.

Fragrance is found in deodorants, perfumes, hairspray, potpourris, candles, laundry and personal care soaps, shampoo, hand and body lotions, fabric softener, plug in fragrance dispensers and room deodorizers, cleaning products, makeup, and more.

Penicillium and Other Toxic Molds

Penicillium, other toxic molds, and pathogenic bacteria may be present in water-damaged indoor environments. The bacteria include Pseudomonas species and other pathogenic bacteria.

Molds can be toxic or allergenic.

A biocide such as bleach (which in itself is toxic and a respiratory irritant) can kill mold. However the dead mold particles can still be allergenic. Remove moldy materials such as cardboard boxes and carpeting, and scrub mold from hard surfaces with a detergent.

Do-it-yourself is only for small areas. Use personal protective equipment (respirator and gloves). Larger areas should be addressed by trained professionals.

Preservatives and Additives in Food Include:

Artificial flavorings – Made up of many chemicals (most are derived from petroleum)

Sodium Benzoate – a drug used for metabolism deficiencies (is an additive in most soda pops)

Dyes - FD & C Yellow Dye No. 5 – May cause severe allergic reactions and hives (must, by law, be listed on the label). FD & C Red Dye No. 3 (may cause cancer) Some dyes have been banned (FD&C Red Dye No. 4). Others have been banned in other countries, but are still used in the U.S.A.

BHA-BHT – Petroleum based antioxidants. – May trigger behavior and breathing problems

TBHQ – a preservative found in candy bars and other items – petroleum based – may cause behavioral and health problems

MSG – may cause allergic reactions, learning disorders, obesity, and reproductive disorders. The intensity of a reaction may be altered in the presence of alcohol ingestion, exercise, and stress. It is hidden in processed foods and may be absorbed through the skin from soaps, shampoos, hair conditioners, cosmetics, and more. MSG may be added as an inert ingredient. Inert ingredients are not required by law to be listed on food labels.

Aspartame, saccharin, and other artificial sweeteners - May cause cancer and numerous other symptoms including interference with normal blood coagulation, blood sugar level, digestive functions, and production of urticaria (hives)

Sulfites may cause shortness of breath, hives, nausea, diarrhea, and fatal shock. Law requires sulfites to be listed on product labels. Have been banned from use on salad bars, but are still used in other food products and beverages.

Petrochemicals

Petrochemicals are chemicals made from petroleum (crude oil) and natural gas. They are found in products used daily including: food additives, perfumes, paints, cleaning chemicals, polyvinyl chloride, rubber, plastics, paper, and textile coatings.

Petrochemicals and their byproducts, including dioxin, can cause many serious health disorders including cancers (e.g., leukemia from benzene exposures), and endocrine disruption. An endocrine disrupter mimics or blocks hormones and disrupts normal body functions.

Over 75,000 chemicals have been registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Only a fraction have been completely tested for health effects and many have never been tested at all.

Minimize petroleum exposures by reading food and other labels and choosing safer alternatives, and avoiding inhalation of vapors when pumping gas, painting, and using cleaning products.

This document has been reviewed and approved by Jack Dwayne Thrasher, Ph.D. Toxicologist, and Michael Connell, Registered Pharmacist & Vice President-Ohio Network for the Chemically Injured