



Toxins In Our Everyday Life

Have you ever found yourself browsing the beauty section of a natural store all excited to start using healthier products, but you ended up feeling overwhelmed, confused and even defeated?

There are currently 82,000 synthetic chemicals in the foods we eat, the toys our children touch, the products we use to clean our homes, the air we breathe, and the cosmetics we apply to our skin—and only a fraction have ever been tested for safety.

What do we really know about how they affect our health?

If so few have actually been tested, how can any company claim that their chemical-laden products are actually safe?

If some chemical levels are considered “acceptable,” what happens when these chemicals react to each other inside of us?

Finding answers can be overwhelming. (That’s why I created the documentary, *Unacceptable Levels*—about the chemicals in our bodies, how they got there, and what we can do about it.)

Here are 10 things I wish every American knew about toxic chemicals... and what we can do about it:

1. Today, you’ve already been exposed to at least 127 unique synthetic chemicals. And that was before you walked out the door. Personal care products carry



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or may carry numerous highly toxic chemicals, including cadmium, mercury, aluminum and lead.

2. "Acceptable levels" of toxic chemicals is an oxymoron. The levels are “acceptable” by industry and regulatory standards, but our exposure to other “acceptable levels” of toxic chemicals that then interact with each other and dance with our cells within our bodies is never taken into consideration.

3. We have over 200 synthetic chemicals in our bodies right now. Our exposure to toxins is that pervasive. Most of us do not detect their presence every moment of every day, but we have to wonder—how are they affecting us? What does this mean for future generations?

4. Childhood disease is increasing exponentially. Cancer is the leading cause of death (after accidents) in children younger than 15 in the United States. Autism now affects one in 50 children. In the last 20 years, there’s been a 300% increase in allergies; 300% increase in asthma; 400% increase in ADHD. We have to ask ourselves, *Why?*

5. Chemicals are big business. Chemicals account for an annual \$3.7 trillion in sales across the globe—the United States makes up almost 19 percent. Many jobs rely on this industry, yet 85 percent of the chemicals in commerce today have not been tested. How are the products containing those chemicals impacting our health? What’s the impact on those who work or live near the chemical plants?

6. About \$2.6 trillion of the GDP is spent on treating disease every year. One can’t help but wonder if there’s a direct correlation between our skyrocketing healthcare costs and the onslaught of chemicals in our daily lives. What would happen if we spent that much on prevention?

7. Many of us eat and drink chemicals every day. Artificial sweeteners, preservatives, nitrates, artificial colors, MSG ... if it’s processed, chances are it contains one or more of these ingredients. Sodium benzoate and potassium benzoate are preservatives that are sometimes added to sodas to prevent mold growth, but benzene is a known carcinogen. Butylated Hydroxynaisole (BHA) is another preservative that’s potentially cancer-causing. Reading labels is an easy solution—if you don’t recognize an ingredient, don’t buy the food product.

8. Organic food can be affordable. Factor in the potential health costs of processed and conventionally grown (read: pesticide rich) foods and organic food doesn’t break the bank. Unfortunately, it’s not always available. The good news: organic food is the fastest growing sector in agriculture. Would we spray a piece of fruit with Raid, then



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rinse it off and eat it? (Probably not the MBG audience, but it's a question to ask your skeptical friends and family.) If we continue to vote with our dollars, organic can become the norm.

9. Your body is the biggest investment that you will ever have in your life. We all know people who spend more time and more money on their cars than they do their own bodies. The fuel we put into our bodies will determine how well it performs and fights against the burden of chemicals.

10. Toxic chemicals are everywhere, but you can do something about it. Start with just one thing: change your personal care products; overhaul your diet by buying only organic fruits and vegetables and avoiding processed “foods” as much as possible; throw away your old household cleaning products and replace them with non-toxic ones.

What can we do?

We are all in this together. Around the world—in every single culture, every religion, every race, every age, every gender and every species, rich or poor—we're all being affected by toxic chemicals.

By Ed Brown