

Environmental Toxins and Our Health

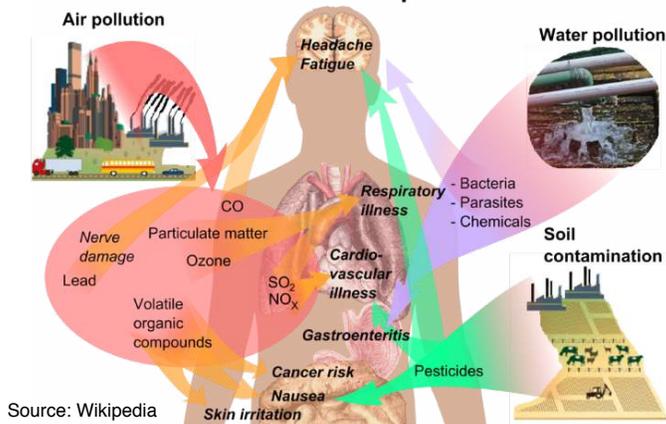
What is a toxin?

A toxin is any substance that has an irritating or harmful effect on the body, by stressing body's normal biochemical functions (Bauman, 2010). Toxins are found everywhere: in soil, air and water and their severity of toxicity depends on the chemical nature, concentration and length of existence in the environment. Toxins present themselves also in our food packaging, personal care products, medications, radiation, dental amalgams. Toxic behaviors such as excessive stress, eating processed foods and smoking further contribute to the total toxic load. Once the toxin enters the body, it has to be eliminated via liver - the main detoxification organ in the body, kidneys, GI tract or it gets stored in our fat cells, making us more toxic and suppressing our immune system function.

Main Categories of Environmental Toxins

- ▶ **Pesticides and herbicides** - according to EPA, up to 95% of non-organic foods have pesticides and herbicides in them. Another big source of these toxins are bug sprays. Can cause cancer, Parkinson's disease, nerve damage, birth defects and miscarriages, blocked absorption of nutrients.
- ▶ **Food additives and preservatives** - they are very often designed to be addictive, so people crave them and overeat, which leads to obesity. They can also cause neurological, digestive, respiratory, and skin problems.
- ▶ **Altered fats** - these are all forms of hydrogenated fats. Our bodies do not know how to process these fats and they end up in the blood circulation, become oxidized and can lead to heart disease and cancer.
- ▶ **Synthetic hormones** - those are found in conventional animal products. They are endocrine disruptors, meaning that they disrupt our own hormone balance in the body and are known to lead to cancer growth.
- ▶ **Toxic metals** - mercury, arsenic, lead and aluminum are the most prevalent and make their way into our bodies via food, air, and water. They cause a number of problems from headaches to cancer, as well as decreased production of red and white blood cells, heart and blood vessel problems. (canada.com). Cause developmental deficits in children.
- ▶ **Household toxins** - these creep into our homes in the shape of cleaning products, air fresheners, paraffin candles, personal care products, paints and solvents, synthetic fertilizers, and flea and tick sprays. (Bauman, 2010)
- ▶ **Mold and other fungal toxins** - they can cause shortness of breath, GI problems, fatigue, disturbed immune system, headaches, fatigue, muscle and joint pain. (Mercola.com)

Health effects of pollution



How to Avoid Them?

- ▶ Eat whole organic foods, grass-fed meats - avoid eating processed and GMO foods
- ▶ Avoid canned food and bottled water
- ▶ Drink filtered water
- ▶ Don't consume food additives and artificial sweeteners
- ▶ Find out your food allergens & avoid them
- ▶ Use glass containers for food storage & stainless steel pots and pans for cooking
- ▶ Don't use antibacterial products
- ▶ Most fish is contaminated with mercury, so check if it's safe at www.seafoodwatch.org
- ▶ Use natural body care products
- ▶ Use water filter on your shower
- ▶ Clean your home & laundry with natural products, no dryer sheets, no dry cleaning
- ▶ Use zero VOC paints and finishes for your home
- ▶ Keep more live plants in your home and crack the windows open
- ▶ Don't use any synthetic fragrances, including burning paraffin candles, which release toxins found in diesel fuel fumes
- ▶ Check your home for mold growth, asbestos, and radon gas
- ▶ Stop using stimulants
- ▶ Wash all new clothing, don't use moth balls
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary medications
- ▶ Don't use glyphosate (Roundup) and other synthetic chemicals around your house
- ▶ Remove your shoes at home - especially if you have small children crawling on floors - shoes are a magnet for outside chemicals
- ▶ Don't smoke & avoid passive smoking

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