

Five Most Common Household Toxic Bombshells

With the Green Movement in full swing, many Americans are beginning to look at their environment in a whole new way. Our alarm over the human contributions to and the potential ramifications of global warming has become paramount in the media, in our schools, and in our lives. Concern for Mother Earth has finally taken center stage; with more attention being turned to the quality of our air, water and food supply than ever before. Yet, in our distress over what ails our planet, we may not be considering what is ailing us right under our own noses.

If you think you're safe once you get home and lock the front door, think again. Your home might be infiltrated by toxic bombshells you don't even know about. Common household items like air fresheners and toothpaste are full of noxious substances known to be harmful to humans. Those wonderful non-stick pots and pans you love may be leaching unwanted chemicals into the delicious foods you prepare. Even food items we are encouraged to eat, like microwave popcorn is dangerous. And the worst of all, the teething ring you might use to pacify your baby may make be laying a foundation of ill health for the rest of her life.

1

Wait, Don't Smell That!

If you're like most Americans you've seen a plethora of carefully crafted air freshener advertisements on the television lately. Darling cartoon animals touting the benefits of this or that brand of air freshener; or the visiting grandmother who enters the home and bypasses her awaiting grandchildren in favor of smelling the carpet and curtains, because, well they just smell THAT good. What these commercials aren't telling you is that air fresheners contain Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC), which are chemicals that are released into the environment as gas. VOCs have been linked to different types of cancer, as well as developmental problems, neurological, reproductive, and respiratory health issues. Does that mean that you can't freshen your home – of course not!

Consider some natural alternatives, such as an essential oil nebulizing infuser and use your favorite essential oils. Many natural foods markets carry a large variety of essential oils and may also have nebulizing infusers. Nebulizers can also be purchased online, but if you don't want to go to the expense, try making your own very inexpensive and quite effective air spray. Simply mix ½ - 1 teaspoon of your favorite essential oil(s) to ¼ cup of cider vinegar (or vodka) in a 10 fl. oz. spray bottle. Once the ingredients have dissolved add purified or filtered water to top off the bottle and enjoy!

Keep in mind that you may not even need to spray or diffuse anything. Ionizers and air cleaners can be great alternatives to sprays, and they effectively clear out bacteria, dusts and pollens, smoke, smog, and odors from animals.

2

A Sticky Situation...

Another important way to truly take care is to replace any harmful kitchenware with those you can feel good about. Let's face it; we've all had our doubts about non-stick cookware. Is it safe or not? Kitchenware often has an antibacterial agent in it called Triclosan. While Triclosan is not a dioxin itself, according to its definition listed in Wikipedia, "it may be degraded by organisms or may react to sunlight creating other harmful compounds including dioxins." Dioxins are known to suppress immune and endocrine system function, and exposure to dioxins has been linked to both cancer and birth defects.

While its true that most pots and pans made from metal leave metal residues in the foods you cook, some metals (such as iron) may actually be advantageous, while others such as aluminum can be harmful. When used at high temperatures the coating of Teflon-coated cookware - as well as other non-stick surfaces - breaks apart emitting toxic particles and gases. According to tests commissioned by the Environmental Working Group (EWG), these toxic particles and gases are linked to, "hundreds, perhaps thousands of pet bird deaths and an unknown number of human illnesses each year."

Okay... so what does that leave? For safety purposes (and even for better tasting food) stainless steel, enameled or well-seasoned cast iron and porcelain cookware are really your best bet. But don't count out silicon; it can be a good alternative to toxic non-stick surfacing.

3

How NOT To Be Stupid and Docile...

For a quick, simple and inexpensive change you can make right away, think about saying, "NO" to fluoride. Here are some reasons why: according to the website InformationLiberation.com, "at the end of World War II, the US government sent Charles Eliot Perkins, a research worker in chemistry, biochemistry, physiology and pathology, to take charge of the vast Farben chemical plants in Germany. The German chemists told Perkins of a scheme which they had devised during the war and had been adapted by the German General Staff. The German chemists explained of their attempt to control the population in any given area through the mass medication of drinking water with sodium fluoride, a tactic used in German and Russian prisoner of war camps to make the prisoners "stupid and docile"(Stephen 1995). Did you say, "Stupid and docile?" If that's not enough, consider that as with kitchenware, toothpaste also contains the antibacterial agent Triclosan we learned about above. Still not sold? Consider that Flourine, the poisonous substance from

which fluoride is derived builds up in the body when consumed regularly and causes **irreversible** damage to the immune system.

If that did it for you, then you can rest assured knowing that there are many fluoride-free and natural toothpaste options on the market today that taste great and get the job done. If you'd rather control exactly what you brush with, you can also make your own toothpaste or toothpowder at home by mixing 3 parts baking soda with one part salt, and place the mixture into a small-mouthed container for easy pouring onto your toothbrush. Add a few drops of wintergreen or peppermint essential oil for better taste, and be sure to blend it well.

4

Popping outside the “Box”...

Speaking of taste – do you enjoy a good bowl of popcorn? (Notice I said, “bowl,” not “bag”). Then its time to dig out that old air popper you have somewhere in the garage and toss out those nasty bags of microwave popcorn. The chemical coating used in making microwave popcorn bags is known to break down during the microwaving process into a substance called perfluorooctanoic (PFOA). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified PFOA as a “likely carcinogen” that has been linked to many different types of cancer as well as developmental problems in children. But you don't have to give up eating this wonderful snack. If you don't have an air popper, remember that you can use one of your new, healthy pots to make delicious popcorn on your stovetop. Use some good quality oil, such as coconut oil and some organic popcorn kernels and you'll have a delectable and healthy treat – toxin-free!

5

Chew on this...

For those who have a baby in the house or a baby in your life, beware the plastic teething ring. In order to make certain types of plastic products pliable, manufacturers use chemicals called Phthalates, which are linked to endocrine, reproductive and developmental problems. Phthalates are used in the making of baby teething rings and other soft, flexible children's toys. Another concern for teethingers is the leaching of BPA or Bisphenol A, which is a synthetic sex hormone that mimics estrogen. Studies conducted on laboratory animals and cell cultures have linked low doses of BPA to obesity, diabetes, thyroid disease, breast cancer, prostate cancer and other illnesses. And lastly, the use of PVC, (polyvinyl chloride) plastic, commonly referred to as vinyl in the production of children's toys and teethingers adds to the problem. According to the Campaign for Safe, Healthy Consumer Products, “When produced or burned, PVC plastic releases dioxins, a group of the most potent synthetic chemicals ever tested, which can cause cancer and harm the immune and reproductive systems.” To avoid these dangerous poisons look for toxin-free baby teethingers online or in fine baby stores.

As your awareness of the toxins in our environment continues to rise, bear in mind that the home environment is often more toxic than that of the outside world. We've learned about a number of toxins that may have infiltrated your home already, creating potential illness and disease. Don't fall prey to the idea that, "they" will keep you safe and free of harm – after all, who are, "they" anyway? Its time to take charge and keep your eyes open for these and other toxic bombshells that may be invading your home and harming those you love.

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