

Men occasionally stumble over the truth, but most then pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.

Winston Churchill

The Prevalence of Toxicity

I am increasingly convinced toxins are the greatest threat to our health, the longer I am involved in healthcare. Toxins are present everywhere in the surrounding environment (exogenous) as well as produced within the body (endogenous). According to Webster toxicity is: “of, relating to, or caused by a poison or toxin.” The July 13, 2000 New England Journal of Medicine stated this way, “Environmental factors constitute 80 to 90% of cancer risk.” Avoiding exogenous toxins and minimizing endogenous toxins is a major factor in disease prevention and health promotion.

Toxins are pandemic.

Since 1900 American industry has introduced over 80,000 chemicals. The average American will come in contact with about 70,000 of those chemicals, and over 20,000 of them are known carcinogens (a substance that can cause cancer). It is estimated that 1,000 newly synthesized compounds are created every year, this is three per day. Scientists know that a large number of these are toxic to humans and may cause or contribute to ill-health and disease. Samuel Epstein, M.D., professor of occupational and environmental medicine at the University of Illinois said, “Wallowing in our own high tech effluvia is a major cause of cancer in modern society. . .”

Greenpeace estimates that your body has a toxic burden (potential exposure and storage) of approximately 177 different kinds of organochlorides. These are highly reactive compounds that include acids, dioxins, PCBs, pesticides, and more. They come from incineration of trash, chlorination of the water supply, spraying crops and the bleaching of paper like that used in coffee filters.

Additionally Epstein has shown that since 1950, overall cancer incidence has increased by 44 percent, breast cancer and colon cancer in males by 60 percent, and prostate and kidney cancers by 100 percent. Cancer of the testicles has increased by 300 percent since 1938; and melanoma, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, multiple myeloma and cancers of the brain and liver are all climbing rapidly.

Consider this according to Greenpeace: 11,473,440 lbs. of aluminum, 921,000 lbs. of copper, 62,877 lbs. of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, 61,693 lbs. of atrazine, and 10,700 lbs. of carbon tetrachloride, to name a few, are dumped into the Mississippi River each year. As if that wasn’t scary enough consider that according to the 1989 Toxic Release Inventory National Report, US EPA, Office of Toxic Substances: 551,034,696 lbs. of industrial chemicals were dumped into public sewers, 1,180,831,181 pounds of toxic chemicals were dumped into the ground, potentially threatening our ground water supply, 188,953,884 pounds of chemicals were released into ponds and streams, and 2,427,061,906 pounds of emissions were released into the air. This presents a huge potential for exposure to harmful and even deadly toxins.

Is it food or is it toxic waste?

Another major source of toxic exposure is the foods we eat. Herbicides, pesticides and fungicides are sprayed on our foods while they are growing and after harvest to prevent spoilage and improve marketability. For example, when eating a peach chances are you will encounter up to five pesticides. Fungicides are sprayed on coffee beans so that they bring top dollar in the market. Approximately 90% of the drugs given to animals have not been approved by the government. Half of the antibiotics produced in America annually are given to animals as a matter of routine. Sixty to 99% of the cattle slaughtered in this country were given synthetic hormones, primarily estrogen, during their growth. It is no longer a question that antibiotic resistance, hormone exposure and toxin exposure are having a negative affect upon our health.

Toxicity - the saga continues.

One additional source of significant exogenous pollution is products used for personal grooming and our clothing. Talc has been added to the list of known carcinogens, while women who used talc and deodorizing powders had an increased risk of 2.8 times of developing ovarian tumors. Coal tar, used in antidandruff shampoos has “overwhelming evidence of carcinogenicity.” According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, almost 1,000 of the chemicals available for use in cosmetics have been found by the government to be toxic. About one-third of a pound of pesticides was used on the cotton used to make one T-shirt.

Add to this, the body produces anywhere from 2 - 4 pounds of metabolic waste every day. It is not unusual for many Americans to have one bowel movement every three to four days leading to improper elimination of these wastes. The potential for creating a toxic waste dump within your body becomes extraordinary. When you consider the external toxins we are exposed to in addition to internal toxicity, it is obvious that something needs to be done to reduce our exposure to these damaging compounds and/or eliminate internal wastes more effectively.

It becomes quite apparent that Dr. Epstein was correct and is probably conservative in his appraisal of how bad the situation is. The role of toxins in causing ill health is unquestioned. We need to minimize our exposure to these health robbers. A key to health is to reduce exposure to toxins and learn how to properly stimulate and maintain the avenues of elimination. I will show you methods to avoid external toxins and ways to eliminate the buildup of internal toxins.