

Living in a Toxic World Part 1 – Sources and Symptoms of Toxicity

All of us are exposed to toxins on a daily basis. Some of these toxins are generated internally and some are external.

When you eat something, the body will break the food down, keep the nutrients it wants and dispose of the rest as waste through natural processes such as urination and defecation. However, if digestion is not working optimally, undigested food can build up in the bowel. This can cause decay of foods left in the bowel resulting in harmful bacteria and yeast growth. Toxins can develop from the harmful bacteria, the yeast, and the food not digesting.

There are also external environmental toxins that most people are exposed to. These are the chemicals that we are exposed to in everyday life, and we often don't even know it. They are breathed in or otherwise ingested.

VOCs

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are the most common example of chemicals that we are exposed to because they are the chemicals we breathe in. These are the chemicals in the air from things such as air fresheners, hair spray, fumes from perfumes and other scented products, car and truck exhaust fumes, smoke, pollution, and even fumes from the grocery store detergent aisle.

Most of these VOCs are associated with respiratory problems such as asthma, allergies, breathing difficulties, immune deficiencies, and autoimmune issues. They can also cause neurological problems including anxiety, mood changes, depression, numbness and tingling, as well as hormonal issues.

PLASTICS AND PHTHALATES

Many plastic containers such as water bottles and plastic food storage containers can leach phthalates into food and drink. Phthalates are a group of chemicals including (but not limited to) BPA, that are used to soften plastic and vinyl. Phthalates are also used in a number of personal care products such as some soaps and shampoos, hair spray, nail polish, and scented products.

Phthalates and plastics are a major source of concern. These chemicals are endocrine disrupters, they cause hormone problems. They have been linked to infertility, endometriosis, menstrual problems, decreased testosterone in men and even to the progression of hormone cancers including breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and prostate cancer. Identifying and removing these chemicals is often necessary to help resolve these health conditions.

Minimization or (better still) elimination of as many of these toxins is vital for everyone. These chemicals may be more dangerous than has been generally recognized and removing as many of them as possible from our lives can not only alleviate current health issues but can often prevent the onset of future health problems.

HEAVY METALS

Heavy metals are called that for two reasons. First, they are physically very dense and they are "heavy" on the periodic table of elements. Secondly, the body has no natural method of removing them. These metals have no metabolic function in the body. Since the body has no method of removing heavy metals, they build up in the fatty organs of the

body including the liver, adrenals, thyroid, and brain. The most common heavy metals that cause health problems are mercury, lead, and cadmium.

There are many sources of heavy metals. Lead, for instance, can be found in the drinking water in some older houses whose lead pipes have not been replaced. Lead can also be found in some surprising places such as some artificial turfs, toys, jewelry, and even some imported candy. It can also be found in old buildings with lead paint and older stored gasoline that is leaded and was stored before lead-free gasoline was legally mandated in the 1970s (yes, people still have stocks of this stored leaded gasoline). It leaches out of the storage tanks and gets into the water supply.

Mercury is emitted into the atmosphere through such activities as the burning of fossil fuels and municipal waste which often contains such things as discarded batteries and light bulbs. The emissions into the atmosphere are then transported and deposited on the earth's land and water surfaces by wind, snow, and rain. Sadly, mercury is also found in much of the commercially available fish.

Not all municipal water filtration systems are equipped to remove heavy metals from drinking water. Exposure to large quantities of heavy metals such as cadmium, aluminum and mercury, to name a few, overloads the body's natural detoxification function. Our bodies simply cannot remove these metals through the filtering organs, and they build up. Heavy metal toxicity can lead to thyroid, adrenal and liver problems. Many thyroid issues have been associated with mercury toxicity. This can result in low energy, an inability to lose weight, skin sensitivity, and brain fog and memory issues.

Aluminum, although not classed as a heavy metal, can create significant health issues. It has no biological function and is difficult to remove. Exposure to aluminum toxicity is primarily from aluminum beverage cans and cookware.

RELIEF FROM TOXICITY

All is not lost. There are tests which help to determine the type and volume of toxins in the body, and there are therapies to remove them.

Stayed tuned for Part 2 – Testing for Toxins

Systematic detoxification that will yield effective and sustainable results is best done in consultation with a healthcare practitioner. The doctors at Green Apple Health Care will carefully design a step-by-step, systematic approach to assessing and treating toxicity that may be affecting you.

Call (780) 485-9468 today for an appointment with one of our experienced and skilled doctors.