

# Environmental News



WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL  
Health care for women | REVOLUTIONIZED



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## Detoxifying your Body: A naturopathic perspective

Kathryn Nobrega-Porter, ND, Wellpath Clinic



Breathing, eating and drinking have the potential to expose us to chemicals. In the 21st century it is impossible to avoid constant exposures and our ability to get rid of harmful substances is essential for health. The interaction between the environment and our body affects how we look, act and feel. Lifestyle choices and diet can influence our level of exposure to toxic substances and our ability to detoxify. Small changes have the ability to make a big difference, and the cumulative effect of a few changes can be powerful. Protecting ourselves leads to the ability to support health now and in the future.

### Toxins and Load

Toxins are substances that can cause harm in our bodies. Molds, food additives, toxic microorganisms, metals and pesticides are only some toxicants we are exposed to regularly. Inside our bodies, toxins disrupt how we function and can overwhelm our system slowing down our ability to remove them. We are often exposed to multiple toxins - the parabens in the lotion we apply to our skin, the bisphenol A from our plastic water bottle and cadmium and other chemicals from cigarette smoke. There is concern about

the additive and synergistic effects of chemicals in our bodies and how they work together. The total amount of these substances in our body is called our Toxic Load. An increase in these toxic exposures is adding to our total toxic load.

### Symptoms of an overburdened body

Symptoms of toxicity may be vague, wax and wane and appear disconnected. It is important to assess for toxicity with any long standing symptoms. Sensitivity to environmental chemicals, debilitating fatigue, depression, anxiety and mood swings, poor memory and concentration, headaches, recurrent infections and muscle aches are symptoms of possible toxicity.

### Reducing Exposure

Have you had exposures to pesticides, a moldy house, dental amalgams or a diet high in animal products? Choosing organic food when possible, avoiding the “dirty dozen health hazards”, drinking reverse osmosis or carbon filtered water out of a glass bottle (and enough of it!) and checking your household plugs for “dirty electricity” can be valuable strategies to help remove some strain off our bodies. Sleep provides our bodies more energy and some hormones to support detoxification. Detoxification can be as easy as getting a good night's sleep.

### Optimize Detoxification.

The liver and gastrointestinal tract is largely responsible for this high energy task. Certain foods and nutrients have the ability to improve our wellbeing by aiding the process of detoxification. For example, B and C vitamins, a complete source of protein, sulforaphane from broccoli and curcuminoids from turmeric provide support for the liver. Ground flax seed encourages healthy bowel movements and has the ability to bind toxins in the gut. Probiotics assist the microbial functions that support detoxification.

Small changes in our daily habits can create favorable outcomes in our health. Avoidance of toxins and use of detoxifying supportive foods and nutrients will do more than help us avoid adverse health effects; they will actually improve our wellbeing. A little bit, a lot of the time can do wonders to support health.

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## Staying Healthy on a Budget

Gloria Fraser MHST, RN, Nurse Education  
Coordinator, Environmental Health Clinic

Health problems such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue and environmental sensitivities can create financial limitations related to job loss and disability. Staying healthy is important. Reflect on what is important to you such as eating organic foods, taking natural supplements or attending yoga classes to stay healthy within your budget.

Remember that the **simple acts of daily preventive medicine** can help you stay healthy.

- > Washing your hands often with soap and water before eating meals and snacks and after blowing your nose or use of washroom can prevent the spread of bacteria.
- > Eat balanced meals and snacks. Follow the Canada's Food Guide and don't skip meals or snacks. Your body needs the nutrients and energy to be healthy and active. Choose organic foods whenever possible and drink lots of filtered water.
- > Take the time to relax, de-stress and exercise. Get plenty of sleep and allow your body to rejuvenate. Avoid exposure to unnecessary environmental toxins such as smoking, smog or chemical agents such as fragranced products.
- > Be safe and be observant of your environment particularly when walking, driving safely and practicing safe sex.
- > See your doctor. Preventive care includes regular physical check-ups and dental care. Stop smoking and limit your alcohol, sugar and sodium intake.

**If you must spend money to stay healthy**, try some of the following suggestions:

### 1. Rethink the way you shop:

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and less red meat. Shop for seasonal and local fruits and vegetables. If you must eat

organic, try purchasing biweekly local harvest boxes. Buy weekly sale items for fish, chicken and other meats and other bulk items. Obtain only what you need for meals and snacks for the week. Do not purchase pre-packaged convenience foods that are high in carbohydrates, fat and salt content. Shop at times when the stores are least crowded.

### 2. Plant a vegetable and herb garden:

If able, work with others in a community garden. Keep fresh herbs such as basil and oregano plants in your kitchen.

### 3. Get supplement savvy:

See a physician or naturopath to determine what vitamin supplements are needed to promote your optimal health. Purchase vitamin supplements in bulk from a discount store, online or sale item.

### 4. Use exercises resources:

You need to move and increase your metabolism. Walk, do stretches, yoga, and use a treadmill at home or buddy up with some friends to exercise. Seek affordable exercise at community centers.

### 5. Barter:

You and your friends can exchange services in exchange for one. You can offer to volunteer and receive rewards such as free access to exercise activities, babysitting services or a hair cut.

### 6. Let massage, and naturopath students practice on you:

Colleges offer client days with minimal costs to allow their supervised students to practice their services.

### 7. Party potluck style:

Eating out is not always affordable. Invite your friends to potluck lunches or dinners and have a theme to add some fun and diversity to the gathering.

### 8. Redeem your reward points/use gift cards:

Enjoy a new book, the theatre, or try a new restaurant by redeeming of points of cards. Ask others to give you gift cards for special occasions for your favourite shops or social outings.

You can stay healthy on a budget. Just take a few moments to determine what you want to integrate into your healthy lifestyle and enjoy the positive results!

## References

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Ten Ways to Stay Healthy,  
[www.livestrong.com/article/123422-ten-stay/](http://www.livestrong.com/article/123422-ten-stay/)

Twelve Affordable Ways to Good health. June 8, 2009.  
<http://anslai.wordpress.com/2009/06/08/12-cheap-ways-to-keep-fit-and-stay-healthy/>



## Canadian Cosmetic Regulations: Not so Sexy

Nancy Bradshaw, Outreach Education Coordinator, Environmental Health Clinic

Do you ever wonder what ingredients are in your cosmetics? In 2010 the David Suzuki Foundation invited Canadians to participate in an online survey about toxic ingredients in cosmetics.

More than 6,200 individuals participated in their survey, providing information for more than 12,500 personal care products. Participants were asked to check ingredient lists for 12 sets of chemicals – a Dirty Dozen ingredients linked to health and environmental concerns, including cancer, reproductive disorders, asthma and severe allergies.

### The results are not so pretty:

- > 80 per cent of products reported contained at least one of the Dirty Dozen ingredients -the most commonly occurring Dirty Dozen ingredient being fragrance/parfum; and
- > over half (57%) of all products reported contained multiple Dirty Dozen ingredients.

Equally disturbing, loopholes in Canada’s cosmetic ingredient labeling requirements result in incomplete ingredient lists on many products. Cosmetics are the only type of product, other than food, where Canadians are provided with the right to know about chemical ingredients. However, the survey demonstrated that:

- > participants were unable to locate ingredient lists on more than 1,000 products;
- > manufacturers are not required to disclose specific fragrance ingredients on the product label – instead, the generic term parfum is listed, representing a mixture of chemicals;
- > parfum is often used in products marketed as “unscented”; and
- > personal care products regulated as “drugs” on

the basis of therapeutic claims (e.g., tartar fighting toothpaste, bacteria-killing cleansers, and face cream with sun protection) are not required to follow the cosmetic ingredient labeling requirements.

### What can you do?

**1.** Purchase products that contain the least number of toxic ingredients; especially the Dirty Dozen ingredients listed in the sidebar.

Go online to

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2010/whats-inside-shoppers-guide.pdf> to download a wallet card that contains this information.

**2.** Avoid scented products – look for “fragrance-free” products and check the ingredient list to make sure there is no parfum or fragrance.

**3.** Be aware and informed. Products labeled as “natural,” “green” or “organic” may contain ingredients that are synthetic or non-organic so don’t be fooled by the marketing claim.

**4.** Check resources such as the Less Toxic Guide and the Skin Deep database for sources of less toxic cosmetic and personal care products.

**5.** Send a note to Canada’s Health Minister asking for strengthened regulations regarding toxic chemicals in cosmetics.

Go to <http://action.davidsuzuki.org/cosmetics>.

**For more information:** Download the full report at

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org/publications/downloads/2010/DSF-report-Whats-inside-that-counts.pdf>.

- personal care products
- Dirty Dozen: Ingredients to Avoid in Cosmetics
- BHA and BHT in moisturizers and makeup
- Coal tar dyes: P-Phenylenediamine in hair dye and colours labeled as C.I.
- Cyclomethicone and siloxanes in hair products, moisturizers and makeup
- DEA, MEA and TEA in creamy and foaming products such as moisturizers and shampoos
- Dibutyl Phthalate in nail products
- DMDM Hydantoin, Diazolidinyl Urea, Imidazolidinyl Urea, Methenamine or Quaternium-15 in hair products, moisturizers and cosmetics
- Parabens in cosmetics and moisturizers
- Parfum (fragrance)
- PEG in conditioners, moisturizers and deodorants
- Petrolatum in hair products, lip balm/lipstick and skin care products
- Sodium Laureth Sulfate (SLES) and Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SLS) in products that lather such as shampoo, toothpaste and body wash
- Triclosan in anti-bacterial products such as antiperspirants/deodorants, cleansers, toothpaste and hand sanitizers



## What's ON

Environmental Health Conference Health Professionals and Medical Students are invited to attend the Environmental Health Conference to learn new clinical pearls for multiple environmental exposures and effects. Learn about prenatal and childhood toxic metal exposure, health impacts of poor air quality, greening of health care and diagnosis and management of chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivity.

Date: Wednesday, May 4, 2011, 0815 a.m. to 4:15p.m.

Place: Cummings Auditorium,  
Women's College Hospital  
76 Grenville St.,  
Toronto, Ontario

To register: Contact Nancy Bradshaw,  
416-323-6400, ext: 4993 or  
nancy.bradshaw@wchospital.ca

Cost: \$100. breakfast and lunch included  
\$50.00 half-day  
\$25.00 students

### Fragrance free event



### Volunteer Recognition Award

Congratulations to one of our consumer representative, Eleanor Johnston, who received a Volunteer Recognition Award from MPP Kathleen Wynn (Don Valley West) for her efforts in raising awareness for Environmental Sensitivities, Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue.

## The Environmental Health Clinic

The Environmental Health Clinic (EHC) at the Women's College Hospital is located on the 5th Floor West 76 Grenville Street, Toronto, ON

Our Clinic phone number is: 416-351-3764 or 1-800-417-7092 and our Fax number is 416-323-6130 You may also visit our Web page under [www.womenshealthmatters.ca](http://www.womenshealthmatters.ca) Please feel free to call or write us for a copy of our Clinic brochure.



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