



Sensible Philosophy

Sensible News aims to provide important health information that may not be readily available from conventional sources. Articles are factual. Any references not listed are available on request.

In the News:

New fingernail test for osteoporosis

British researchers have discovered that floppy fingernails may be an early warning sign for osteoporosis. Both nails and bone contain disulphide bonds, which are critical for strength. This discovery could mean that a scan of your fingernail in the doctor's office is all that will be needed to determine your risk. (1)

Comment: This finding suggests that bone strength is largely about the protein or collagen matrix, and not just about calcium. See [Sensible News 29](#) for more information on osteoporosis.

Hysterectomy causes earlier menopause

New research from the University of Auckland has found that women, who have had a hysterectomy, even if both ovaries were retained, can expect to reach menopause 4 years earlier than normal. Women who also lose one ovary can expect to reach menopause even earlier than that. (2).

Appointments at Sensible-Alternative Naturopathic Clinic are available weekdays 8am to 6pm. 12 Ridge St., North Sydney. Call: 02 9922 4009

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In the News:

Sperm improves with acupuncture:

Research from the University of Shanghai has shown that acupuncture improves the quality of sperm, and increases male fertility. (3)

Europe bans plastic additive in children's toys:

On July 5, the European Parliament voted for a permanent ban on phthalates in children's toys. (4) Phthalates are added to most plastics as a softening agent. They are a proven oestrogen mimic, which means that they increase the risk for hormone imbalance and reproductive cancers. Children's toys are considered high risk because they are chewed, but other plastics such as those used in medical devices are also under scrutiny.

Common cosmetic ingredient linked to breast cancer and declining sperm count:

Parabens such as butylparaben, propylparaben and methylparaben have proven oestrogenic activity. They have been potentially linked with reproductive cancers and low sperm count. The research in this area is new, but the Cosmetic Ingredient Review Expert Panel in 2004 takes it seriously enough to have ordered a review of their safety. (5)

Hormone disruption from chemicals is real

Many of us have heard the whispers of "hormone disruption" for more than a decade. Now, finally, the mainstream medical community is paying attention. In July of this year, the prestigious Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published "Endocrine-disrupting chemicals probed as potential pathways to illness." The researcher Dr Trubo found that the foetus is at greatest risk from hormone disruption. Exposure in utero will increase the risk for reproductive cancers later in life. (6)

Chemical companies have been saying that the amounts are too small to be significant, but we now know that hormone disrupting chemicals such as those found in plastics, pesticides and cosmetics (see next page) are dangerous when they are only a **few parts per billion**. This is because the hormone system is exquisitely sensitive. It is not possible for our bodies to completely detoxify these chemicals, and we cannot adapt to them because they stimulate our receptors sometimes thousands of times more strongly than our own estrogen. See [Sensible News 27](#) for more information on *Hormone Disruption*

Where are the hormone disruptors?

According to the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the average human body is contaminated by 116 man-made chemicals. Over 250 toxic substances have also been identified in human breast milk, including perfumes, sunscreens, pesticides and heavy metals. It is estimated that breast fed infants ingest 42 times above what is regarded as the safe limit for dioxin, a chemical that in does not even have a safe limit, because according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, dioxin is 300,000 times more carcinogenic than DDT.

Hormone disrupting chemicals include dioxins, benzenes, phthalates, PVC, paraben, and many others. Look for them in:

- Air pollution, mainly from industrial emissions such as manufacturing, and agriculture
- Harsh cleaning products
- Dry-cleaning
- Pesticides on food and, if you spray, in your home
- Cosmetics including moisturisers and sunscreen
- Styrofoam, especially with hot drinks
- Plastic, especially when heated, such as in a microwave
- Chewable baby toys
- Plastic liners in cans and long-life milk containers
- Carpets and furniture contain brominated flame retardants

New trend in Breast Cancer Research

As discussed in [Sensible News 27](#), hormone disruptors can cause many conditions such as endometriosis, declining sperm counts, PCOS, early puberty, miscarriage, thyroid disease and many others. The most alarming trend, however, is the rise in breast cancer.

Last year, the American Breast Cancer Fund released a report called: *State of the Evidence 2004: What Is the Connection between the Environment and Breast Cancer?* According to the report, the rapid increase in breast cancer in recent decades has occurred at the same time as a staggering increase the number of chemicals. Nancy Evans, the editor of the report says that "compelling scientific evidence" links breast cancer with some of the 85,000 synthetic chemicals in use.

Resource: www.breastcancerfund.org

Turmeric protects against cancer

Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, has been proven to encourage cancer cells to commit suicide. The research from the University of Texas is just more good news in the ongoing research on this traditional spice. Turmeric's potent anti-inflammatory properties had already been established. And you don't need a lot. Researchers say that the anti-cancer effect is measurable with a low dose over time. Turmeric is available in your kitchen, and in tablet form from your Naturopath.

Protect your receptors with phytoestrogens

The best protection form hormone disruptors is to avoid them. Minimise your risk by avoiding hot drinks in Styrofoam and microwaving in plastic. Avoid pesticides and harsh cleansers, and use only natural cosmetics.

Unless you can turn back the clock 100years, however, it is impossible to avoid all hormone disruptors. Until government regulation cleans up our environment, you need to protect your receptors. One way is with plant oestrogens. Unlike environmental oestrogen mimics, which bind to our receptors many times more strongly than our own oestrogen, plant oestrogens are gentle, and bind less strongly, but can block the chemical from the receptor. A recent Finish study confirms that plant oestrogens (not true oestrogen) protect against breast cancer. (7)

Plant oestrogens are found in linseed (flaxseed), raw nuts and seeds, liquorice root, bean sprouts and lentils. Soy is another phytoestrogen, and is useful in moderation, but is not recommended in high dose.

References:

- (1) United Press International. Monday, July 11, 2005
- (2) British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology. 112:956-962. 2005.
- (3) Fertility and Sterility 84: 141-7. 2005.
- (4) Reuters. July 5, 2005.
- (5) Bergfeld W Safety of ingredients used in cosmetics. J Am Acad Dermatol 2005;52:125-32.
- (6) Trubo, Richard. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals probed as potential pathways to illness. JAMA 2005; 294: 291-293
- (7) Pietinen, P et al. 2001. Serum enterolactone and risk of breast cancer: A case-control study in eastern Finland. Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers & Prevention. 10(4): 339-344
- (8) Siwak, DR et al. Curcumin-induced antiproliferative and proapoptotic effects in melanoma cells... Cancer. 2005 Jul 11

Next month: Breast Cancer – Part 2

New research on breast cancer is looking at the relationship with insulin resistance and vitamin D deficiency.

More evidence that natural progesterone may be protective.

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