



## **From the News this month:**

### **Dioxins in Sydney Harbour Fish are just the tip of the iceberg:**

There have been recent reports of unacceptable level of dioxin in Sydney Harbour fish. Some species had up to 100x the level deemed to be safe by the World Health Organisation.

**Comment:** *There are a couple of points about this story that must be read between the lines:*

1. The dioxin is not new. This is the **first time** in 50 years of fishing that Australian fish has been **tested** for dioxins.
2. Dioxins are toxic at extremely low levels.. According to the WHO, an acceptable level is 1-4 picograms per gram. A picogram is about **1 trillionth of a gram**. They are this toxic because they are hormone disruptors.

Hormone disruption has been discussed in previous issues of Sensible News ([Issues 27 & 32](#)). Dioxins are not the only hormone disruptor in fish. Traces of PCBs have been found in farmed salmon (1). Other hormone disruptors common in our lives include pesticides, plastics, and even cosmetics. They interfere with sex hormones and thyroid function. (The thyroid is very susceptible.)

**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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## **PCOS Update:**

### **Too little magnesium causes insulin resistance:**

Magnesium helps prevent diabetes and other insulin resistant conditions, such as PCOS. New research has shown that children whose diet contained magnesium-rich foods such as leafy green vegetables, fish and nuts were less likely to develop insulin resistance. Milk, although it does have some magnesium, did not have the same protective effect. (2)

**Comment:** *Magnesium is necessary for the cells to respond to insulin. Because it is depleted by the processing of food, magnesium is one of the most deficient nutrients in the modern western diet. Magnesium supplements are cheap and available. Dose 400-500mg. It is often combined with other nutrients such as chromium.*

### **Women with PCOS have male finger length pattern:**

Some women with PCOS have a pattern of finger length similar to men. Australian researchers measured finger length in 140 women, and found that those with PCOS had a shorter 2<sup>nd</sup> finger compared to their 4<sup>th</sup> finger. This is similar to the male pattern, and suggests that these women were exposed to too much male hormone in the womb. (3)

**Comment:** *If this is correct, it means that PCOS is not simply a question of your lifestyle. It may actually reflect your mother's lifestyle (or more likely, in my view, to your mother's exposure to toxins).*

### **Soy may impair the development of ovaries:**

Newborn mice injected with genistein, a soy constituent, were later found to be sub fertile or infertile. Their ovaries exhibited an unusual pattern of egg development (4).

**Comment:** *Soy formula is not appropriate for infants. In my career as a Naturopath, I have never recommended westernized soy for children either. It is true that Asian cultures have eaten soy for many years, but only in small amounts and not as westernised soy, such as soy milk, which is different than traditional Asian products. Asian soy foods are fermented to render them suitable for consumption. Because Western soy milk is not fermented, it contains higher concentrations of potentially undesirable constituents.*

**Less Sun means earlier Menopause:**

In a recent survey of 157 Turkish women, the following lifestyle factors were most strongly associated with *earlier menopause*:

- Low lifetime sun exposure, current use of calcium supplements, not owning a house, heavy physical activity and high blood pressure (5).

**Home test for Male Fertility soon on market:**

At least 40% of infertility is due to the male, and soon, there will be a quick way to diagnose it. A new home-test released in the UK this month will assess the ability of sperm to swim through a barrier of artificial cervical mucus. This will provide early detection of a male problem and can direct couples to seek help. It may also save the woman from unnecessary testing!

**Comment:** *Natural treatments such as antioxidant supplements and acupuncture have been shown to improve sperm motility and quality.*

**5 steps to check your neck for thyroid**

**enlargement:** Adapted from Mary Shomon's brilliant web-source *Your Guide to Thyroid Disease* [www.thyroid.about.com](http://www.thyroid.about.com)

Thyroid disease such as goiter is a common condition. You can detect it early with this simple check.

1. Stand in front of a mirror
2. Tip your head back



3. Drink some water
4. Watch for any enlargement or movement in the area of the thyroid
5. Feel for movement of the soft gland under your fingers when you swallow (it is abnormal to be able to feel the thyroid)
6. If you think that it is enlarged, or if you detect any lumps, see your GP, and then your Naturopath.

**Correction about licorice root:**

In the Dec 2005/Jan 2006 issue of Sensible News, page 2 said that licorice root increases blood sugar. This is incorrect. It increases *blood pressure*, a welcome effect for those who suffer from low blood pressure

**Call for Questions:**

Sensible News will host a **NEW question and answer** column. Every month one or more of your questions will be answered by Lara and published in the newsletter. To submit a question, please send an email to: [lara@sensible-alternative.com.au](mailto:lara@sensible-alternative.com.au).

Your first name and state will be published unless you request to remain anonymous.

**Let us consult with your local Naturopath:**

If you cannot get to our clinic, we may still be able to help you. Sensible-Alternative is pleased to announce our new **Naturopath consultant service**. Your local Naturopath is invited to consult by phone with us *about you*. She or he can then pass on treatment to you.



Bookings are essential. Cost is \$50 per 30 minutes or portion of cost for time used. Watch the website for further information.

## References:

- (1) Environmental Working Group. PCBs in Farmed Salmon. [www.ewg.org/reports/](http://www.ewg.org/reports/)
- (2) Huerta MG et al. Magnesium deficiency is associated with insulin resistance in obese children. *Diabetes Care*. 2005; 28(5):1175-81
- (3) Cattrall FR et al. Anatomical evidence for in utero androgen exposure in women with polycystic ovary syndrome. *Fertil Steril*. 2005; 84(6):1689-9.
- (4) Jefferson, W et al. Neonatal Genistein Treatment Alters Ovarian Differentiation in the Mouse: Inhibition of Oocyte Nest Breakdown and Increased Oocyte Survival. *Biol Reprod*. 2006. 74: 161-168.
- (5) Ozdemir O et al. The age at menopause and associated factors at the health center area in Ankara, Turkey. *Maturitas*. 2004; 49(3):211-9.
- (6) [www.thyroid.about.com](http://www.thyroid.about.com)

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