

Greenlist Bulletin

From the Toxics Use Reduction Institute
at the University of Massachusetts Lowell

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This is the weekly bulletin of the TURI Library at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Greenlist Bulletin provides previews of recent publications and websites relevant to reducing the use of toxic chemicals by industries, businesses, communities, individuals and government. You are welcome to send a message to mary@turi.org if you would like more information on any of the articles listed here, or if this email is not displaying properly.



Early-life exposure to chemical in drinking water may affect vision, study finds

[Source: Boston University Medical Center. July 11, 2012](#)

BOSTON, MA – Prenatal and early childhood exposure to the chemical solvent tetrachloroethylene (PCE) found in drinking water may be associated with long-term visual impairments, particularly in the area of color discrimination, a new study led by Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) researchers has found.

The study by epidemiologists and biostatisticians at BUSPH, working with an ophthalmologist from the BU School of Medicine, found that people exposed to higher levels of PCE from gestation through age 5 exhibited poorer color-discrimination abilities than unexposed people. The study, published July 11 in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, recommends further investigation into the visual impairments associated with PCE exposure.

The research team assessed visual functioning among a group of people born between 1969 and 1983 to parents residing in eight towns in the Cape Cod region of Massachusetts. The towns all had PCE in their drinking water because of pipes outfitted with a vinyl liner that was improperly cured. Previous studies led by Ann Aschengrau, professor of epidemiology at BUSPH, have found associations between PCE exposure and cancer, as well as reproductive and developmental outcomes. Increases in the risks of breast cancer and certain birth defects were seen in the team's prior studies.

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Read article from *Environmental Health Perspectives* [here](#).

Chemicals in personal care products may increase risk of diabetes in women

[Source: Brigham and Women's Hospital, July 13, 2012](#)

Brigham and Women's Hospital study is the first to examine an association between phthalates and diabetes in a large population of American women

BOSTON, MA – A study lead by researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) shows an association between increased concentrations of phthalates in the body and an increased risk of diabetes in women. Phthalates are endocrine disrupting chemicals that are commonly found in personal care products such as moisturizers, nail polishes, soaps, hair sprays and perfumes. They are also used in adhesives, electronics, toys and a variety of other products. This finding is published in the July 13, 2012 online edition of *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Researchers, lead by Tamarra James-Todd, PhD, a researcher in the Division of Women's Health at BWH, analyzed urinary concentrations of phthalates in 2,350 women who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. They found that women with higher levels of phthalates in their urine were more likely to have diabetes. Specifically:

- Women who had the highest levels of the chemicals mono-benzyl phthalate and mono-isobutyl phthalate had almost twice the risk of diabetes compared to women with the lowest levels of those chemicals.
- Women with higher than median levels of the chemical mono-(3-carboxypropyl) phthalate had approximately a 60 percent increased risk of diabetes.
- Women with moderately high levels of the chemicals mono-n-butyl phthalate and di-2-ethylhexyl phthalate had approximately a 70 percent increased risk of diabetes.

The study population consisted of a representative sample of American women and was controlled for socio-demographic, dietary and behavioral factors. However, the women self-reported their diabetes and researchers caution against reading too much into the study due to the possibility of reverse causation.

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Read *Environmental Health Perspectives* article [here](#).

Changes in chemical safety law getting bipartisan support

[Source: Chicago Tribune, July 9, 2012](#)

Author: Michael Hawthorne

The first signs of bipartisan support for overhauling the nation's chemical safety law emerged Monday, as three Republicans joined 23 other senators calling for tough restrictions on toxic flame retardants.

Citing the Tribune's "Playing With Fire" investigation, which exposed a deceptive, decades long campaign by the tobacco and chemical industries to promote flame retardants, the lawmakers called for a sweeping update of the federal Toxic Substances Control Act. The 1976 law gives the government little power to assess or limit dangers from flame retardants and the scores of other chemicals added to furniture, electronics, toys, cosmetics and household products.

"Americans deserve to know that the chemicals used in everyday consumer products are safe," the senators wrote in a letter to Lisa Jackson, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency administrator.

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U.S. EPA Updates Technical Fact Sheets and Emerging Contaminants Page

[Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, June 6, 2012](#)

Technical Fact Sheets - FFRRO Contaminants of Concern

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO) published the following technical fact sheets, which provide brief summaries of

contaminants of concern that present unique issues and challenges to the environmental community in general and to FFRRO in particular. Each fact sheet provides a brief summary of the contaminant, including physical and chemical properties, environmental and health impacts, existing federal and state guidelines, and detection and treatment methods. Sources of additional information about each contaminant are also included in the fact sheets. These fact sheets are intended for use by project managers and field personnel in addressing specific contaminants at cleanup sites and are updated annually to ensure they include timely information.

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Doctors overlook chemical illnesses, study finds

[Source: University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, July 10, 2012](#)

Sufferers seek out health care more often than others

SAN ANTONIO, TX – Chemical intolerance contributes to the illnesses of 1 in 5 patients but the condition seldom figures in their diagnosis, according to clinical research directed by a UT Medicine San Antonio physician.

Clinical tools are available to identify chemical intolerance but health care practitioners may not be using them, lead author David Katerndahl, M.D., M.A., said. The study is in the July 9 issue of *Annals of Family Medicine*. UT Medicine is the clinical practice of the School of Medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio.


Avoidance of triggers

The study's authors said physicians need to know how chemical intolerance affects certain people and understand that conventional therapies can be ineffective. Some patients would improve by avoiding certain chemicals, foods and even medical prescriptions, the authors said.

Patients with chemical intolerance go to the doctor more than others, are prone to having multi-system symptoms and are more apt to have to quit their job due to physical impairment, the authors said.

[Read more...](#)

Read article from *Annals of Family Medicine* [here](#).



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