

Poisonous Waters

Consider the following facts about water quality in the United States:

- Of the over 2,000 contaminants found in potable water, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established standards for only 82.
- Municipal water treatment is primarily set up for disinfection rather water purification.
- Only 50 of the more than 60,000 water treatment facilities in the United States have modern equipment that can effectively remove toxic chemicals.
- Over half of community water systems fail to comply with federal testing requirements.
- When an adult takes a 15-minute bath or shower in water that contains chlorine or VOCs, as many toxins will enter the body as would be ingested by drinking two gallons of the same water. The absorption levels are even higher in children.
- In the United States alone, 42 million people are drinking water contaminated at dangerously high levels.
- One in six people drinks water containing excessive amounts of lead, which can impair cognitive functions, especially in children.
- According to the EPA, "Every home in America has an elevated level of chloroform gas present due to the vaporization of chlorine... from tap and shower water." Chlorine vapors are a suspected cause and irritant of respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis and allergies.
- The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) report concluded that; "Therefore while much tap water is indeed risky having compared available data we conclude that there is no assurance that bottled water is any safer than tap water."

In taking all of these facts into consideration, it is difficult to know what to do. But there are a variety of ways you can safeguard yourself and your loved ones from health problems associated with contaminated water. One of the ways is to make sure you treat the water that enters your home. Filters on your sinks and showers can help eliminate these dangerous chemicals on sight. It is also important to use toxic free products inside and outside your home.

The Organic Consumers Association sent out some interesting facts that might make you think twice about the products you use to "take care" of your yards:

- An analysis of the most popular lawn and garden pesticides shows more than half of the products include ingredients classified by the EPA or the World Health Organization as possible carcinogens, one third contain known or suspected endocrine disruptors, and more than a fourth contain reproductive toxins.
- Over 40% of the most commonly used lawn and garden pesticides are banned in other countries yet US homeowners annually apply 90 million pounds of these types of pesticides to gardens and lawns where kids frequently play.
- Homeowners apply three times more pesticides per acre of their lawn than farmers apply to agricultural crops.

- An EPA study found that lawn pesticides are easily tracked indoors and exist in the carpet and flooring for years.

Educating yourself about what products are safe to use is the best defense against exposing loved ones and the environment to toxic chemicals. There are many products on the market today that make it possible to avoid unhealthy and dangerous treatments.

Information for this article was sourced from:

1. Humabuilt. 2005. <http://www.humabuilt.com/>.
2. Organic Consumers Association. 2005. <http://www.organicconsumers.org/>