



HEAVY METAL

THE DARK SIDE OF YOUR ENVIRONMENT

BY ELODIE BARAKAT

Heard about heavy metals but don't really know what they are? "Pollution" doesn't always mean unnatural. The noxious effect comes with their use or misuse, like uranium and petroleum that are naturally produced by the Earth. It's the same with heavy metals. Extracted from the Earth's depths for industry, read on for the long and short term effects of heavy metals.

MEET THE BAD BOYS

ARSENIC, LEAD, MERCURY, CADMIUM, ALUMINUM, AND NICKEL- they are the superstars. Some linked results of exposure can lead to

- Various types of cancer
 - Respiratory diseases
 - Neurological damages leading to motor skill deterioration, reduced cognitive skills, and even dementia
 - Chronic pain, arthritis and rheumatism
 - Accelerated aging
 - Increased risk of allergies
 - Increased bacterial resistance due to an unintended antibiotic effect
 - Replacing essential nutrients, such as iron or calcium, encouraging a variety of conditions such as anemia and the increased risk of osteoporosis
 - Reduced fertility levels
- And children are even more likely to suffer from exposure than adults.

KNOW THE BATTLEFIELD

Where do they hide? Industry, agriculture and excessive consumerism have surrounded us with heavy metals. From bodies of water to the soil and air, check out some lesser considered examples of where you can find traces of heavy metals.

FOOD AND WATER Agrochemicals, fertilizers, toxic waste and even our daily waste (like batteries) contaminate soil, rivers and seas. It's not surprising to learn that seafood, cereals, fruits and vegetables can be highly contaminated with heavy metal. The same logic applies to water: heavy metals seep into the soil and contaminate underground water supplies.

TEETH FILLINGS Though modern fillings are done with a resin, fillings were once metal, and guess what? Chock full of mercury! If you still have metal teeth fillings, you might consider changing them up.

HOME In some homes lead plumbing is still very common and even some paints can contain lead.

TOBACCO Cadmium mostly, but mercury, arsenic and lead can also be found in cigarettes so butt out!



THINGS LIKE DEPRESSION, MEMORY LOSS, INSOMNIA, CHRONIC PAIN, HEADACHES, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, COLITIS, IRRITABILITY, TREMORS, AND INCREASED FOOD ALLERGIES MAY ALL BE SYMPTOMATIC OF METAL EXPOSURE

ARM YOURSELF

First, recognize the symptoms: Things like depression, memory loss, insomnia, chronic pain, headaches, high blood pressure, colitis, irritability, tremors, and increased food allergies may all be symptomatic of metal exposure. While these conditions can certainly be caused by countless other factors, studies prove that exposure to toxins can lead to heightened incidence rates of the lengthy list we just went through.

- Don't just eat tuna and salmon. They're larger, live longer and therefore store up more heavy metals which accumulate in their bodies. Vary your seafood diet from small to big, from sea to river, and so on.

- Have a diversified diet in general. Diversifying your menu reduces your risk of having too much of any one thing.
- When you use tap water, take it cold. Warming in the pipes reportedly increases contamination levels.
- Try not to expose yourself to too much pollution. Smog takes its toll on your health. Think smart- Don't jog at rush hour through a busy intersection.
- Think green. The less toxic your household cleaners for example, the less likely you are to take in external aggressors. Use reusable bags, some plastics are poisons too!

NEUTRALIZE

Garlic and chlorophyll both capture heavy metals in your tissues and cells and encourage evacuation from the body through urine. That is a quick and easy detox cure. You know where to find garlic (fresh is better), and as for chlorophyll, it's one of the main elements allowing plants to breath, meaning photosynthesis. You know, absorbing carbon dioxide and letting out oxygen. And, it's also chlorophyll that gives plants their shade of green! Eat green vegetables and herbs for your chlorophyll shot! Concentrate on vitamins, calcium, zinc, selenium, magnesium... Your body needs it.

Keep in mind that natural detoxification can take years. Heavy metal poisoning can also be very sudden and highly toxic if the exposure level is high enough. See your doctor if you experience symptoms like the ones mentioned above, for a thorough check up. When it comes to heavy metals, better not to miss them ■

