



WHAT'S NEW...

UPDATE on BPA...

A new U.S. study on the plastic compound bisphenol A indicates that the chemical may be far more dangerous for young children than for adults. The finding has been submitted to Health Canada for its current safety review of BPA, and bolsters the case for limiting bisphenol A exposure in infants, who lack the capacity that adults have to detoxify it.

Bisphenol A is used in polycarbonate baby bottles and the epoxy linings of cans, including those for almost all types of infant formula. Because BPA can mimic estrogen, many researchers suspect it is a factor in health trends linked to sex hormone imbalances, such as prostate and breast cancer. (See last newsletter's feature article on BPA, December 2007, available on the WHEN website.)

WOMEN'S HEALTH MATTERS

This year WHEN was at the Women's Health Matters Forum and Expo (WHM), sponsored by Women's College Hospital on Jan. 18-19. The WHM organizers chose a clear environmental focus this year and WHEN was right there. As well as our well-stocked table, WHEN hosted two film workshops, featuring *Toxic Trespass* and *Exposure: Environmental Links to Breast Cancer*. Both workshops were well-attended and WHEN's volunteer education coordinator, Dorothy Goldin Rosenberg, led a lively discussion of the issues. Most exciting, the keynote address featured epidemiologist Devra Davis, a long-standing supporter and friend of WHEN and impressive expert featured in both films. Speaking to a sold-out audience, she pointed to the significance of workplace hazards and environmental toxins in the ongoing rise of cancer incidence. Citing evidence well documented in her new book, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*, Dr. Davis raises the spectre of widespread efforts among industry interests to withhold known cancer facts from the public. Her final message: there has never been a better time to act. Devra Davis is back in Toronto April 7 to address occupational health hazards and cancer. Check the WHEN website for more info.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Visit us online and click on the *Canada Helps* link at the top of our home page. Of course, we also accept donations by mail or telephone... and anything over \$10 is tax deductible. Thanks!

TOXIC TRESPASS IN PARIS

Last November, *Toxic Trespass* was selected for screening at the Paris International Environmental Film Festival to an enthusiastic audience. The word is spreading!

Calendar of Events

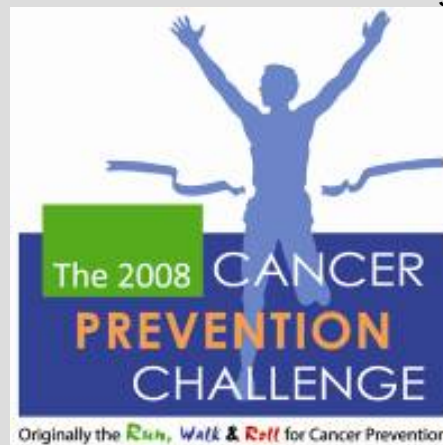
Celebrate Earth Day 2008

In honour of Earth Day, WonderWorks is holding a free screening of *Toxic Trespass*, on April 22, at 79a Harbord St., Toronto. For more, info@gowonderworks.com.

Earth Day Canada's flagship event at Toronto's Downsview Park is coming up on Sunday, April 20. Come and plant a tree, check out the cool earth-friendly stuff, partake in organic food and fun activities with the kids! Visit the WHEN exhibit booth!

www.earthday.ca/pub/events/festival/downsview.php

Join The Cancer Prevention Challenge!



The name has changed, to encourage different ways to raise funds for cancer prevention beyond **Running, Walking & Rolling**! Here's one way we haven't changed: The Cancer Prevention Challenge is still *the* fundraiser in Canada devoting all its efforts and proceeds to cancer prevention. WHEN, the sponsor this year, will be entering a WHEN team at the Ottawa Race Weekend, May 24-25. For more, see www.womenshealthyenvironments.ca.

Taking Action for Prevention

The Inside Dirt on Air Pollution

By Manisha Pawha

When we think of air pollution, mold, household cleaning products and asbestos are unlikely to initially come to mind. Air pollution, commonly perceived to be a strictly outdoor phenomenon, is also a critical health issue in indoor environments such as homes, schools and workplaces. Considering that Canadians spend approximately 90% of their time indoors, health and well-being are significantly impacted by the quality of the enclosed environment.

What is indoor air pollution? According to the World Health Organization, indoor air pollution is defined as, “contamination of the air inside buildings”. Many components can taint air inside enclosed spaces such as the home and workplace. The adverse health effects of indoor air pollution range from mild discomfort to chronic, life-threatening conditions, such as respiratory diseases, cancer and even death. Factors that affect health as a result of exposure to indoor air pollution include: a) type of contaminant; b) length and frequency of exposure to contaminant; c) interaction(s) of contaminant with co-contaminants and other substances (i.e. the creation of hazardous by-products); d) individual susceptibility (genetics); e) existing health conditions; f) age; and g) gender.

Women and young children are especially vulnerable to indoor air pollution in the home, as Canadian women, on average, spend more time in the home than men (4.3 hours per day versus 2.5 hours, respectively). By virtue of spending nearly 2 additional hours in the home than men, women are more exposed, and hence more susceptible, to adverse health effects derived from the unique cocktail of contaminants found in the home environment. These include personal care products, animal dander and environmental tobacco smoke. Unlike public spaces such as offices and schools, there are no residential regulations for air quality and hence the homeowner bears the responsibility for maintaining optimal air quality in the home.

By practising simple actions, you can make a meaningful reduction of air pollution in your environment to improve the health of those utilizing the space:

- Clean and dust regularly
- Use organic, non-toxic household cleaners and personal care products
- Implement ventilation to bring in cleaner outdoor air (open a window) and remove air contaminants from inside a home (fans)
- Maintain home appliances, heating and cooling equipment in good condition
- Avoid smoking inside the home
- Regulate water and moisture to reduce the development of mold, mildew and bacteria

Spending time indoors can be more healthy and enjoyable by creating a cleaner indoor environment.

Additional resources:

MedlinePlus Health Topic: Indoor Air Pollution:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/indoorairpollution.html>

World Health Organization Programme on Indoor Air Pollution:

<http://www.who.int/indoorair/en/>

American Lung Association Indoor Air Pollution Fact Sheet:

<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=35381>

Taking Action for Prevention is a regular feature where volunteers and friends of WHEN can also share their experiences. If you would like to contribute to a future issue, contact us at office@womenshealthyenvironments.ca.

The Lymphatic System & Our Health

By Mahalia Freed, ND

The lymphatic system is central to our health, yet it is often overlooked in western medicine. Working in concert with the blood circulatory system, lymphatic function supports every other system in the body by providing nutrients, draining wastes, and coordinating immune system activity. White blood cells – the so-called “soldiers” of our immune system - are produced and transported throughout the body via the lymphatic system. As well, lymphatic channels perform a crucial function in draining away waste material from virtually every cell and organ in the body. Unlike our blood circulatory system, the lymphatic system has no pump. *Lymph moves when we move.* When we are sluggish, so is our lymph, and this is recognized as having a significant impact on our health. Sluggish lymphatic drainage can lead to nausea, fatigue, swelling and joint pain. Symptoms associated with lymph blockage include breast tenderness, fibrocystic breasts, worsened allergies & food sensitivities, sinusitis, more frequent colds and ‘flus, fatigue, and skin breakouts. Many practitioners associate cancer with lymph blockages. In general, if lymph function is compromised, detoxification and the immune system are compromised.

Some ways to attain & maintain optimal lymphatic health are:

- 1) Regular exercise: Start with something you enjoy
- 2) Deep breathing: Regularly (!) and via intentional breathing exercises such as Alternate Nostril Breathing
- 3) Contrast hydrotherapy: For instance, alternating hot (3 min) & cold (30 sec) water in the shower, ending on cold
- 4) Touch: Lymph drainage massage, self breast massage
- 5) Topical: Regular use of creams or oil specially formulated with herbs and essential oils for lymph circulation, such as a customized herbal breast oil
- 6) Saunas: To promote detoxification via the skin, and stimulate lymphatic circulation

Ask Dr. Mahalia

If you have questions or topic suggestions, please email Dr. Mahalia Freed at mahalia@dandelionnaturopathic.ca