

# There Are Chemical Dangers In Your Home

BY RENEE WILSON  
NENCAP Healthy Families

Common household items may pose chemical health hazards for your family. Though well-known toxins such as arsenic, mercury and lead have been largely phased out of everyday products, the endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDC) have not.

The Endocrine Society explains EDCs can be found in electronics, clothing personal care items, antibacterial products and pesticides. People are exposed to these chemicals through inhalation, skin contact or oral consumption.

The endocrine system is the group of glands that produce and secrete hormones that are responsible for controlling major processes in the body such as regulating

body's growth, metabolism, sexual development, blood pressure and others that are essential for everyday function. EDCs can mimic, antagonize or interfere with hormone production. These chemicals disrupt the body's normal hormone processes.

Research in the past couple of decades suggests that chemicals and the disruption of hormones can produce a broad array of conditions for people of all ages, possibly including birth defects, obesity, diabetes, and some cancers. Pregnant women and young children are considered to be the most vulnerable, but certainly are not the only population that is likely to suffer the negative effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

One known EDC, polybrominated diphenyl ethers

(PBDEs), is used as a flame retardant in furniture and certain textiles. Studies suggest that prenatal exposure to PBDEs can harm the developing nervous system, lead to behavioral and cognitive problems such as hyperactivity and lead to impaired motor function.

A second endocrine-disrupting chemical, phthalates, is used to make plastic more flexible and is found in plastic packaging, garden hoses, children's toys, personal care products and detergents. Prenatal exposure of phthalates is linked to changes in the male reproductive system and an increased risk of allergies.

Bisphenol A (BPA) is used to prevent rusting and can be found in metal food and beverage containers as well as in some dental sealants. High prenatal exposure can

increase the child's risk of developing behavioral problems, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and impaired liver function later in life.

Be aware of Triclosan which is utilized as an antibacterial agent. It may be found in clothing, kitchenware and toys. It is also added to toothpastes, soaps, and some cosmetics. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website states, "Triclosan is not currently known to be hazardous to humans. But several scientific studies have come out since the last time the FDA reviewed this ingredient that merit further review."

You can limit exposure to the endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Since EDCs accumulate in household dust, use a moist cloth to keep surfaces in your home as dust-free as possible. Vacu-

um frequently with a HEPA filter and remove shoes to avoid tracking in dust. Open windows every few days to minimize chemical exposure.

Shop and eat wisely to maintain a healthy body weight because EDCs accumulate in body fat. Eat fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and avoid canned and processed foods.

Thirdly, be careful with plastic items. Do not microwave food or beverages in plastic containers. When a plastic container is labeled "microwave-safe," it merely means the container will likely not melt, crack or fall apart when used in the microwave. The "microwavable" label is not a guarantee that it will not leach chemicals into food when heated. Select stainless steel, ceramic, stoneware or glass for food storage.

Additionally, use wood, not plastic, cutting boards; avoid single-use, disposable packaging; and avoid plastic cutlery and dinnerware.

More tips and information are available through Northeast Nebraska Community Action Partnership's Healthy Families program. This free service provides personalized, one-on-one, parent- and child-focused support, education and resources into families' homes in Northeast Nebraska. NENCAP Healthy Families follows the national Healthy Families America model that supports nurturing parent-child interactions which are proven to reduce the prevalence of child abuse and neglect. There are no income guidelines for Healthy Families. Call 800-445-2505 or 402-385-6300 to speak to a Healthy Families Advocate.

## Scouts

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the middle sibling, earned his Eagle Scout rank in June 2014. Thomas (17), the youngest, earned his earlier this month and is currently in the process of planning his ceremony.

As part of the requirements, Austin centered his community service project on the disc golf course at Pierson Ranch Recreation Area. He spent two years going around to local businesses and sold sponsorships for different holes through baskets and advertisement.

Being the first in his family to receive the award, Austin felt great about his accomplishment and wanted his brothers to enjoy the same triumph.

"I kept on telling (my brothers) to keep on going with it," Austin said. "It took a lot of hard work and dedication, but it taught me to be a better person."

When he first started Boy Scouts, Austin primarily enjoyed camping. He said some of the most important things he learned about survival carry over to real life.

"One of the things it always taught me was, during the winter time, you should have a kit in your vehicle," he said. "If you get stuck somewhere, the things in that kit will help you survive for a while. I always keep a lot of stuff in my truck just in case anyone else needs help."

Now that he is older, Austin enjoys teaching new scouts and volunteering at Lewis & Clark Boy Scout Camp in Tabor during the summers.

Morgan's Eagle Scout project included working with the City of Yankton and the local VFW to construct a 35-foot flag pole at Fantle Memorial Park.

"It's called Memorial Park, yet we didn't have a year-round flag there," Thomas said. "It had been an idea that was always talked about in our troop. It seemed like a cool choice for an Eagle Scout project, so I took it up."

The VFW donated half the money for the flag pole and the city helped lay the ground work for construction. Morgan visited local businesses asking for donations to cover the remaining amount. In addition, he received a donated slab of granite from Luken Memorials Inc. to mark a dedication to veterans.

"It taught me to keep focused, to keep the goal in mind of getting it done and

getting it done well," Morgan said. "It was definitely a good feeling being able to get it done."

Thomas also worked towards serving veterans with his project.

American flags are placed throughout the park on national holidays to honor those veterans who lost their lives in service. The problem was that they had more flags than there were sleeves in the ground to hold the flags aloft. As a result, family flags had to be rotated.

"There was a lot of talk about how the VFW would like some more flag sleeves in the ground at Memorial Park," Thomas said. "I originally got a map and started looking at it like where would be some good spots to put them."

Thomas spent more than 70 hours mapping out the area. During the planning process, he admits he ran into some issues with nearby trees, irrigation and power lines. After a few calls to the city, he was able to add 54 more flag sleeves to the park. This will allow room for more flags to be added in the next few years.

"I feel honored to be a part of my troop and for them to be supporting me all the way through to Eagle," Thomas said. "It was encouraging seeing that (my brothers) were still doing it and having fun with it, so it kept me going."

All three boys learned wonderful things through their years in Boy Scouts - friendship, memorials and skills they carry with them as they enter their future careers.

"For getting Eagle, you are part of a very few," Morgan said. "You're going to make a lot of friends and earn a lot of great experience camping and just getting outdoors. That is definitely something that is going to stick with me."

"It was a lot of the camaraderie of all the boys," Greg Hill said. "They have done so many things that I couldn't have done for them by myself."

Yankton also has three other families whose three sons have all achieved Eagle Scout rank. The Schloss, Lillebold and Laden families are no strangers to the amount of work it takes to achieve the highest rank among Boy Scouts. After generations of achievement, the scout oath stands true for all these families. "To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

Follow @alwooc01 on Twitter.

## MMC

From Page 1A

and Instagram — was a shot in the dark for MMC.

"Since we were dipping our toe in it, we put out a general message of 'Here's what student scholarship do,'" said Viereck. "We didn't know if we'd raise one dollar or a heck of a lot more."

Due to the latter outcome, MMC is repeating the formula but with a different hashtag and a stronger social media presence.

Since Nov. 2, MMC has put out a picture a day of a student holding a whiteboard with a brief message of a reason to donate. The hashtag used is #30Days30Reasons.

"It's been really neat to see the reasons students have had," said Viereck. "There have been messages

from 'I want to cure cancer' to 'So I can inspire children to be the best they can be.' It's great to see all the things students want to do with their degrees."

This year's hashtag focuses less on MMC and more on the students who will benefit from the donations.

"When you invest in the college, you're investing in the students and their futures," said Viereck. "When you give to student scholarships, you help fund them so more students can come to MMC and call Yankton home."

To learn more about the #30Days30Reasons campaign and to participate in this year's Giving Tuesday drive, visit [www.mtmc.edu/giving-tuesday](http://www.mtmc.edu/giving-tuesday) or contact the MMC Office of Advancement at 605-668-1542.

Follow @ReillyBiel on Twitter.

# ASK THE EXPERTS

## Family Medicine

Q. What is Pertussis?  
Q. How do I get protected?

A. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious bacterial infection that causes violent coughing. The coughing makes it hard to breathe and produces a deep "whooping" sound.

Pertussis can occur at any age. The number of pertussis cases in the United States has increased in recent years.

On average, symptoms begin about 7 to 10 days after the pertussis bacteria enter your body. Initial symptoms usually resemble the common cold.

Infants under 6 months of age, adolescents and adults may have a cough that lasts many weeks without the characteristic whooping sound. If you have a cough that lasts more than a week without improvement, contact your medical provider. A swab from your nose or throat can confirm the diagnosis. A vaccine is available for both children and adults.

Doctors recommend 5 total doses of the DTaP vaccine for all infants and children, unless there is a medical reason to withhold vaccination.

Children are usually immunized at ages 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 15 to 18 months and 4 to 6 years.

Vaccines are also available for older children and adults. These age groups receive a pertussis vaccine called Tdap. This should be given at age 11 or 12 and every 10 years thereafter.

If you have whooping cough, avoid contact with infants, young children and pregnant women.

If you have whooping cough, your doctor will prescribe antibiotics. You will no longer be contagious after about five days of antibiotics.

However, your cough may continue for weeks even if you're taking antibiotics.

If you or someone you know has a persistent cough, contact Lewis and Clark Family Medicine.

2525 Fox Run Pkwy., Lewis & Clark Medical Plaza, Yankton 260-2100



Jeffrey Johnson, M.D.

## Chiropractic

Q. Why do I get back pain when I exercise regularly?

A. A good percentage of my patients work out with walking, yoga, boot camps, jogging, etc., and some of them diet while exercising. They take care of themselves, and yet they get back pain. If the back pain has affected their activity, I let my patients know that it is better to vary their training, rather than focusing on one or two things. They can use the rule of the 'littles'. It is better to do a little flexibility work, a little resistance training, a little cardio, a little nutrition and a little brain exercise than to immerse in one or two fitness disciplines for 30 minutes daily. I also advise a little more sleep and a little less stress. When statistics show that 10-25% of degenerative aging is due to genetics, that means the 75-90% of aging is under our control. Chiropractic adjustments help restore function of the systems to address back pain, aging and wellness to keep you on track.



Sheila Fitzgerald, DC

first chiropractic CENTER

2507 Fox Run Parkway, Yankton, SD, 665-8073

## Fitness/Health

Q. With my busy holiday schedule and consuming a few more calories how can I keep from gaining weight this season?

A. The answer is you really have to be serious about it! Let yourself indulge in some of your favorite holiday foods but set rules for yourself. For example, limit the amount of calories you drink, pre-determine what are reasonable and acceptable portion sizes, don't hover around the food table tempting yourself etc. It is much easier to avoid consuming the extra calories than it is to try and work them off later, but here are a few quick workout ideas to stay ahead of the holiday bulge. Maintain your regular workout routine if you are able and then use these quick tips to burn off a few more calories. Calories burned, of course, depend on your weight and intensity, but these are close estimates. Walk up and down your stairs for ten minutes and burn around 100 calories. Jog up and down them and burn close to 200! A brisk 20-minute walk or a 15-minute jog will net you 100 more calories. A quick ten minutes of jumping jacks will burn 50 calories and playing catch with a football or playing Frisbee for 30-minutes will burn another 100. Remember, exercise control now to avoid frustration later!



Angie O'Connor, Clinical Exercise Specialist

Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center

501 Summit, Yankton • 668-8357

## Funeral & Cremation

Q. What type of service should I have?



Jim Goglin

A. Only you can answer that question. The type of service conducted for the deceased, if not noted in a pre-plan, is decided by the family. The service is usually held at a place of worship or at the funeral home. The service may vary in ritual according to religious denomination or the wishes of the family. The presence of friends at this time is an acknowledgment of friendship and support. A private service is by invitation only where selected relatives and a few close friends attend the funeral service. A memorial service is usually a service without the body present and can vary in ceremony and procedures according to the family's community and religious affiliations.

Legacy Affordable Burial & Cremation Solutions

1014 W. 8th St., Yankton • www.goglinfh.com  
665-4414 • 866-615-2906  
Open Mon.-Sat. 10am-4pm



## Pharmacy/Nutrition

It's that time of year to review and try to understand your health insurance. Know what and how your health expenses will be covered. Many services will be covered at no charge, especially preventative care (e.g. vaccinations, mammogram, colonoscopy, dental cleaning). Science shows if you take advantage of these preventative services, your overall health expenses will be less. Review your choices: premiums and copays, preferred providers, mail order, tax advantages, etc. Health care can be expensive, but you can minimize that expense by checking out your options. No matter your age or how many people you are needing to cover. Ask questions of all your providers for alternatives or get a second opinion. Be informed.



Kim Kortje

HyVee EMPLOYEE OWNED  
Pharmacy • 665-8261

## Ear, Nose & Throat

Q. Dr. Rumsey, with Thanksgiving and Christmas approaching, is there anything I can do to hear conversation better during our noise family gatherings?



Matthew Rumsey, Au.D. CCC-A

A. Ma'am, you are definitely not alone! Typically, trouble understanding conversation is the first sign of hearing loss; however, even people with normal hearing can struggle in noisy environments. Some quick tips for better listening include trying to limit noise sources such as TVs, radios, or even clanking dishes. Focus on one speaker at a time. Listen with both your eyes and ears. If you have hearing aids, wear them! Don't bluff. Be assertive and ask for clarification. Whether you have hearing loss or not, these strategies can be very helpful. If you have tried these tips and are still having difficulties, schedule an appointment with an audiologist to explore other options to point you in the right direction toward better communication.

Avera Medical Group Ear, Nose & Throat Yankton

Avera Sacred Heart Hospital Professional Office Pavilion 409 Summit St., Ste. 2600, Yankton • 668-8601

## Podiatry

Q. What causes dry, flaking skin at the bottoms of my feet?



Terence Pederson, D.P.M.

A. Dry skin that does not improve with regular over-the-counter lotion or creams may actually be a form of athlete's foot. The typical athlete's foot can present as a red rash that starts between the toes and moves to larger areas of the foot. Sometimes small blisters may form resulting in itchy patches of skin on the feet. However, this may not always be the case. Chronic athlete's foot can present a little differently and may be confused with dry skin or eczema. If you have tried over-the-counter creams and lotions with little relief, you may have chronic athlete's foot that can be treated by simply using an antifungal cream or sometimes an oral antifungal medication. There are also some other systemic diseases that can cause dry, flaking skin of the feet such as diabetes or psoriasis. These types of causes of dry skin can be treated with prescription topical medications as well. Occasionally skin scrapings can be sent to the lab for evaluation to determine the cause of dry skin.

Seeking treatment sooner rather than later is important to prevent any fissuring or cracks of the skin leading to open sores at the bottom of the feet. These fissures can be difficult to heal due to the weight-bearing surface in which they occur. Prevention and early treatment are the keys to quicker healing and are also important to overall health.

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