



NUTRITION NEWS

Abilene ISD

STUDENT NUTRITION
DEPARTMENT

November 2021

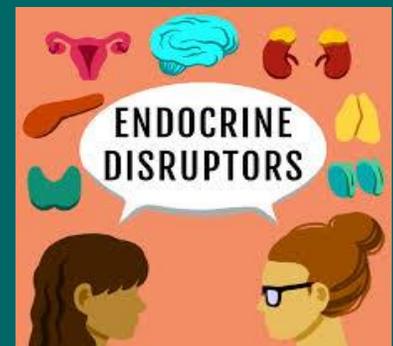
IN THIS ISSUE:

Let's Talk Endocrine Disruptors!

First, what is the endocrine system? Well, this system happens to be a big deal. It is our body's messenger system made up of different glands and organs that produce a whole bunch of signaling molecules, called hormones, that underlie all bodily functions, from maintaining healthy body temperature, healthy weight metabolism, the body's growth and sexual development and function, as well as regulate sleep and mood, among other things.

So then, what are endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)? They are natural or synthetic chemicals that interact with your endocrine system in a number of different ways. Some mimic natural hormones your endocrine system produces and secretes (like estrogen, melatonin, and insulin) and trick your body into thinking they are the real hormones. Other EDCs can increase or decrease the levels of hormones in your blood, which alters how they are made, stored in your body, or broken down. Other EDCs block natural hormones from doing their job, and then some can change the sensitivity and responsiveness of your body to different hormones.

EDCs can disrupt many different hormones, this is why they have been linked to so many poor, chronic health outcomes, such as and not limited to, certain cancers, obesity, cardiovascular problems, neurological and learning disabilities, alterations in sperm quality and fertility, endometriosis, abnormalities in sex organs, early puberty, immune function, respiratory problems, metabolic issues, altered nervous system function, and diabetes. EDCs pose serious health risks for everyone, but especially children, whose little bodies and endocrine systems are experiencing such rapid periods of growth and development.



- **Let's Talk Hormone/Endocrine Disruptors**
- **More on Endocrine Disruptors and Tips on How to Avoid Them**



- **VeggieHead Tales**
- **Recipe of the Month**
- **Motivational Quote of the Month**

More on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals and

Tips on How to Avoid Them

We know of about 1,000 synthetic chemicals that mimic or disrupt hormones that contribute to disease and disability. The evidence is strongest for 4 categories of chemicals: flame retardants used in electronics and carpeting, pesticides used in agriculture, dysphenols used in aluminum can linings and thermal paper receipts, and phthalates used in personal care products, cosmetics and packaging.

Below are tips on what you can do to avoid exposure to EDCs and what words and clues to look for when buying certain foods/products or detoxing your home:

- ❖ **Open windows in your home and recirculate the air:** There are chemicals, such as flame retardants, that have been sprayed into upholstery, so think carpet or furniture, that affect the developing brains of kids by disrupting thyroid hormone (the growth hormone for the brain of kids in pregnancy and childhood). Recirculating the air in your home gets rid of these persistent pollutants. Yes, the outside air has pollutants too, but in much lower amounts. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports that the indoor air may be 5x worse than outside air.
- ❖ **Ditch your shoes at the door:** Shoes are the number one thing that track in pesticides, herbicides and nasty bacteria, and this is especially important if you have infants crawling around.
- ❖ **Wet mop:** Using a wet mop to sop up the dust, instead of spreading dust particles through the air with dry mops or dusters, helps clear the air and prevents the nasty dust particles from recirculating and getting in your airways.
- ❖ **Do NOT microwave or machine dish wash plastics:** Even though it may say "microwave safe," the reality is that microwave safe is only pertaining to warping of the plastic, whereas at a microscopic level there is breakdown of that outer layer. Plastic is a polymer, a chain of carbon based molecules, and when you heat them, they break off one by one, thus getting into your food and then your body. Same goes for machine dish washing plastic containers, the heat and detergent wears down the outer layer. If the plastic is scratched, it's time to throw it away because whatever protective layer you are counting on, it's gone.
- ❖ **Look at the recycling number on the bottom of plastics:** The numbers 3, 6, 7 and that 3 with a triangle are the ones to avoid. 3 is for thiolates, chemicals that literally make plastics softer. They mess with your metabolism; they also mess with quality, production and metabolism of testosterone. This can actually be life or death matter because low testosterone is a predictor of adult cardiovascular disease and stroke. 6 is thyrene and known carcinogen, and 7 are bisphenols, chemicals that mimic estrogen and activate estrogen and have a bunch of consequences.
- ❖ **Ditch fragrance filled self-care products, scented candles, and certain cosmetics:** What you put **on** your body is just as important and impactful as what you put **into** your body, as your skin absorbs everything you put on it. Open up your cabinets and go through any and all products and look for words like "fragrance" and "phthalates." The word "fragrance" is a classic trade industry loop hole. You don't know what's going in these products and the company can say that it is "safe" and they can use that word without the food and drug administration having any authority or questioning what's exactly in these products, or if they have even been studied or passed through toxicology. So in general, avoid or toss anything with these words on them. This is not to say that there aren't companies out there trying to do better, because there are. A good/safer company is going to know exactly what is in their products and be transparent about it. Rule of thumb: The less chemicals and ingredients, the better.

More on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals and Tips on How to Avoid Them Continued...

- ❖ **Pack your own self-care products when traveling:** Avoid using hotel minis, they can be the biggest culprit for chemicals, as well as being a big driver of the plastic footprint, aka not environmentally friendly.
- ❖ **Eat organic:** Study after study, low income as well as high income population, kids as well as adults, has shown that in 2-3 days of switching to organic foods, you drop the level of pesticides measurable in urine immediately. Yes there are pesticides used in organic food that do have their own toxic effects, but it is very low use compared to conventional, because there are all these technical/mechanical water irrigation steps that are taken to reduce the exposure. You eat organic, you automatically are avoiding genetically modified organisms (GMO). Be aware of the list of allowable uses for organic. Good rule of thumb: if it has a tough outer covering, like a banana or avocado, that you won't eat, it is okay to buy conventional, but produce, such as leafy greens, that you directly put in your mouth, you will want to buy organic.
- ❖ **Avoid eating from or using aluminum cans:** Instead buy/use glass products or Tetra packs (paperboard, like cartons). If you need to use plastic, look for the numbers 1, 2, 4, or, 5 on the plastic.
- ❖ **Swap out cookware:** Yes, non-stick pans are more convenient because we like easier clean up, but those pans and cookware come at cost to our health. There are nasty, harmful chemicals that break off and cook into your food when using. Switching to cast iron and stainless steel will be your safest bet!
- ❖ **Avoid harsh chemicals around the house:** Whether that be cleaning products, like bleach, inside the house or using weed killer, like round-up, for yard work, it is best to avoid using these harmful chemicals. Opt out for safer household cleaning products, like vinegar and baking soda, as well as organic and more natural weed killers. Checkout the list of companies recommended by the Environmental Working Group (EWG). There are EWG apps that help you identify safer products to use in different settings. Anything you are not sure about or want to know more about can be found at your fingertips!

Toxic Household Products



It is proven that chemicals make us fatter. There are 50 or so chemical obesogens. There are these other forever chemicals called perfluoroalkyl substances, or PFASs. These chemicals literally turn the body's metabolism the wrong way, and will tell the body not to burn any fuel and keep it as fat. There was a study in which folks had successfully lost weight. They measured the levels of PFASs after they lost weight, the ones who gained the most weight back had the highest levels of PFASs.

Something to think about...

VeggieHead Tales

Vegetarian diets can be misunderstood a lot of the time and society can have the perception that vegetarian diets are less nutritious than traditional diets. However, this is not necessarily true. A vegetarian lifestyle can be just as nutritious as diets that include meat. They just require a little more planning to make sure that daily protein needs are being met. Some excellent sources of protein for a vegetarian diet include beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and seeds, eggs, and cheeses and milks. Additionally, there have been more meat alternatives available at the grocery store that make it even easier for vegetarians to enjoy recipes and meals containing meat by substituting the meat for one of the available meat substitutes. Just like with any meal, traditional or vegetarian, it is important to incorporate a source of protein to provide the necessary nutrients, but also so the meal offers satiety/fullness. Vegetarian diets are also less harmful to the environment. Studies have shown that it takes more land, water, and food resources to raise cattle for meat production than it does to farm vegetables and legumes. Give this month's vegetarian recipe a try and consider incorporating a meatless day into your weekly routine. Not only will it be delicious and nutritious, but it will also be beneficial to our environment!

BUTTERNUT SQUASH & BLACK BEAN SKILLET ENCHILADAS

Servings:4 | Prep Time: 5 min | Cook Time: 20
min

INGREDIENTS

2 tsp Olive Oil

3 ½ cups Peeled & Cubed Butternut Squash (can buy pre-cut at store)

1 Medium Yellow Onion, Diced

3 cloves of Garlic, Minced

½ diced Jalapeno

1 15oz can of Black Beans

8 Yellow Corn Tortillas, cut into thick strips

1 15oz can of Enchilada Sauce

1 cup Reduced-Fat Colby Jack Cheese

1 tsp Cumin

1 tsp Chili Powder

Salt & Pepper to Taste

Cilantro & Low-Fat Sour Cream for Serving

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. HEAT OLIVE OIL OVER MEDIUM-HIGH HEAT IN OVEN-SAFE SKILLET. ADD ONION, GARLIC, & JALAPENO & COOK 2-3 MINUTES. ADD CUBED SQUASH, CUMIN, CHILI POWDER, & SEASON WITH SALT & PEPPER. COOK UNTIL SQUASH BECOMES FORK TENDER, ABOUT 10-13 MINUTES.
2. NEXT, ADD BLACK BEANS, CORN TORTILLA PIECES, & CAN OF ENCHILADA SAUCE & STIR. REDUCE HEAT TO MEDIUM-LOW, ADD ½ CUP OF CHEESE, STIR AGAIN & ALLOW TO SIMMER FOR 2-3 MINUTES. TURN OVEN BROILER TO HIGH, ADD REMAINING ½ CUP OF CHEESE ON TOP & PLACE SKILLET IN THE OVEN FOR 3-5 MINUTES.
3. REMOVE FROM HEAT & SERVE IMMEDIATELY. ADD FRESH CILANTRO & LOW-FAT SOUR CREAM TO EACH SERVING.

"WHAT WE FEAR DOING MOST IS USUALLY WHAT WE MOST NEED TO DO." READ THAT AGAIN.