



Day Ten: Toxins: Your Gut Always Knows!

What are Toxins?

Toxins are any substance which is dangerous to the body. What makes something a toxin is generally dependent on the level of its presence in the body. That, of course, can often be difficult to determine because we are exposed to so many chemicals. It's basically impossible to understand the impact of the interactions between them.



Your skin is your body's largest organ and readily absorbs just about everything it comes in contact with. When you think of toxins, chemical spills and air pollution may come to mind, but the toxins that affect our gut are much more prevalent than that. They can range from black mold in our house, perfumes and scents in laundry products, and even in long-lasting lipsticks.

They also can enter in your food, in the air, the water, and on the clothes you wear.

It's no wonder our guts have such a hard time staying balanced.

We're going to cover just a few of the most common toxins, what they do to the gut (and therefore the brain), and how we can avoid them.

Personal Care Toxins

Most of us do everything in our power to make our homes safe places, but they are in fact some of the most dangerous places for our guts and our brains. Especially the bathroom.

Something you might find shocking is that the FDA permits arsenic, lead, and mercury in cosmetics. Hair dyes, mouthwash, antiperspirants, deodorants, soaps, body scrubs, and shampoos all contain toxic chemicals, especially products that soap up a lot.

Toothpaste is also a problem thanks to the fluoride, sodium lauryl sulfate, and triclosan, and the food dyes in tooth gels. Aspartame and other artificial sweeteners in the dental care products add to the toxic soup.



Here is a list of additional dangerous chemicals in cosmetics:

1. Parabens are basically cheap preservatives that are hormone disruptors.
2. Fragrance... what exactly is in "fragrance" anyway? Could be any one of over 3,000 chemicals, all of which are potential hormone and microbiome disruptors.
3. Phthalates are used to make products more liquid. You'll see them labelled as AKA, DPB, DEP, BBP, etc. They are connected to diabetes and ADHD, and thus are dangerous for the brain.
4. Octinoxate, which can also show up as octyl methoxycinnamate (OMC) on the ingredients list, is a sunscreen chemical. But it is also found in hair color, shampoo, and some cosmetics. It has hormone-mimicking effects, is linked to inflammation, and is also suspected of contributing to cancer and thyroid problems.
5. Triclosan (an ingredient) and Microban (a brand name) are antibacterials that can and do destroy the good bacteria in your gut.



Many long-lasting lipsticks contain lead! Stay away from them.

It's interesting to note that better hygiene might be associated with increased Alzheimer's risk. Countries like the U.S., Canada, and many in Europe including Sweden are considered among the cleanest countries in the world, thanks to all the antibacterial soaps, shampoos, and body washes, yet these countries have extremely high rates of Alzheimer's.

When everything is sanitized, we are exposed to a far less diverse range of bacteria, viruses, and microorganisms, which means our gut microbiome is lacking the diversity it needs and the immune system develops poorly. This can lead to a myriad of problems including increased inflammation.

Our Food

You can't have a real discussion about gut health without talking about the most toxic chemicals that are on and in our food.

The first, of course, is glyphosate, and I discussed that already at length earlier in this program, but it's important to understand just how much this toxin affects the microbiome and the brain.

Glyphosate is actually an antimicrobial that is patented as an antibiotic. We already know that antibiotics destroy both bad and good bacteria. Destroying the good bacteria leaves our gut lining open to overgrowth of and injury from bad bacteria, yeast, and pathogens. That can lead to leaky gut and inflammation, which of course affects the brain.

This is one reason it is so important to eat organic whenever possible.

But the food is grown in our environment, where the air and the water are just so contaminated, it's hard to avoid chemicals even with organic food.



The Environment

Pollutants in our air and water come from vehicle and aircraft emissions, manufacturing processes and farming chemicals. Drinking water contains toxins like flouride, chlorine and heavy metals, all of which are harmful to the gut.

There are also antibiotics (and other drugs) in our water supply due to drugs being flushed down the toilet and excreted in urine.

Air pollution can negatively affect short-chain fatty acid production, altering the gut lining and increasing inflammation, contributing to leaky gut.

Toxic Mold

Did you know that 25% of harvested crops test positive for mycotoxin contamination each year? While toxic levels are typically low enough that your body can flush them out with little impact, what you eat and how you wash, store, and prepare your food is still important, even if mold is not visible.

Mycotoxin exposure can also occur through inhalation, especially when exposed to water damaged buildings. While many airborne mycotoxins can be ingested once they're inhaled from the surrounding air, new research is suggesting that these chemicals

actually directly affect your immune response genes, which can lead to widespread inflammation and leaky membranes, including those in the gut.



Black mold exposure has often been misdiagnosed as dementia because the symptoms can be identical. Left unchecked, the effects are often rapid cognitive decline in addition to many other symptoms like COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), arthritis, weakness, and extreme fatigue. If there is any hint this could be in your environment, take remedial action immediately and consult with a specialist in mold toxicity treatment. This is a very serious toxin.

Under the Sink

Commercial household cleaning products are dangerous to our guts. Bleach is an antimicrobial that is as damaging as the antibacterials. It affects our gut microbiome in the same way as antibacterials and antibiotics.

Synthetic fragrances derived from petroleum are also found in laundry detergents, softeners and dryer sheets, cleaning products, air fresheners and scented candles. Whenever you see “fragrance” listed as an ingredient, you should put it back on the shelf.

Formaldehyde is a carcinogen found in dishwasher soap, cleansers, fabric softeners, and some paper and plastic products. Sodium hydroxide is a caustic found in drain cleaners.

The Environmental Working Group is a great resource for checking products for safety. [Here](#) is a link to the different databases they have built for checking food, cleaning products and personal care products. They also have apps for your phone so you can check while you’re shopping.

Alternatives to Toxic Products

I’m sure you’ve heard about DIY products you can make yourself with some common items like vinegar, baking soda and essential oils.

I quite using commercial products some time ago, and besides saving tons of money, my house feels lighter and cleaner. No heavy toxic cleaner smell.



Here are two DIY recipes you can try yourself:

Surface cleaner – fill a spray bottle with 1/2 distilled water and 1/2 white vinegar. Add essential oils as a cleaning boost or for scent. I usually add around 20-30 drops of citrus oil for additional cleaning power and a fresh smell.

Scrubbing cleanser – baking soda and water. That's it. mix it into a paste and coat generously. Let set for around 15 minutes and scrub off with the appropriate brush or pad for the surface. Rinse. Repeat if necessary.

Baking soda can also be used as an air freshener by placing it in a glass jar and adding some essential oils. Baking soda can also be used as a rug deodorizer.



Getting back to basics is one way to increase our microbiome health. The key to all of this is maintaining gut health so the microbiome can assist in binding and removing toxins, as well as performing all the key activities like assisting with hormone balance, immune modulation, neurotransmitter creation and nutrient absorption and assimilation.

The gut is the center of wellness in so many ways. The more it has to act like a sewer system, the less its ability to perform higher level functioning. And that's when the trouble begins.

Today's extra: A great source of DIY non-toxic household cleaning products

<https://greatist.com/health/27-chemical-free-products-diy-spring-cleaning#3>

AND A great resource describing the most troublesome personal care products and suggestions for replacement: <https://www.healevate.com/10-toxic-personal-care-products-you-need-to-replace/2>