GLOBAL HEALING CENTER NATURAL HEALTH & ORGANIC LIVING

How Does Chlorine in Water Affect my Health?

How am I Exposed to Chlorine?

Taking a long bath or shower increases a person's risk for chlorine exposure because chlorine can enter the body through skin absorption or through the eyes, nose, and ears.

Chlorine has long been used to disinfect our drinking water because it controls the growth of such unwelcome bacteria as Ecoli and Giardia. You have to be careful also, to take precautions even when showering or drinking tap water.

3 Common Exposures to Chorine:

- Absorption through skin from water and from the air
- Drinking & Eating
- Breathing in the fumes that chlorine can create

What all of this means is that people need to be more aware of some of the seemingly innocent dangers that they are commonly exposed to.

What are Possible Symptoms of Exposure to Toxic Levels of Chlorine?

Research has shown, however, that long-term exposure to chlorine leads to the production of free radicals within the body. Free radicals are carcinogenic, and cause tremendous damage to our cells.[1]

Did You Know?
The risk of developing cancer is 93% higher in people who drink or are otherwise exposed to chlorinated water?[2] Chlorine is a potential health hazard to both children and adults, and it is an issue that should be taken quite seriously.

According to a US study that was released in 2018, certain irritants called trichloramines are released any time chlorinated water reacts with organic materials (such as sweat or urine) from people.[3] Trichloramines are believed to initiate a biological process that effectively destroys the cellular barriers surrounding the lungs.

Children exposed to large amounts of chlorine could potentially suffer asthmatic attacks. In one research study, rats exposed to chlorine and chloramines developed tumors in their kidneys and intestines.

Chlorine, Cancer, and Heart Disease

"We are quite convinced, based on this study, that there is an association between cancer and chlorinated water." - Medical College of Wisconsin research team

The addition of chlorine to our drinking water began in the late 1800s and by 1904 was the standard in water treatment, and for the most part remains so today. We don't use chlorine because it's the safest or even the most effective means of disinfection, we use it because it is the cheapest. In spite of all our technological advances, we essentially still pour bleach in our water before we drink it. The long term effects of chlorinated drinking water have just recently being recognized. According to the U.S. Council Of Environmental Quality, "Cancer risk among people drinking chlorinated water is 93% higher than among those whose water does not contain chlorine."

There is a lot of well founded concern about chlorine. When chlorine is added to our water, it combines with other natural compounds to form Trihalomethanes (chlorination byproducts), or THMs. These chlorine byproducts trigger the production of free radicals in the body, causing cell damage, and are highly carcinogenic. "Although concentrations of these carcinogens (THMs) are low, it is precisely these low levels that cancer scientists believe are responsible for the majority of human cancers in the United States". The Environmental Defense Fund

Simply stated chlorine is a pesticide, as defined by the U.S. EPA, whose sole purpose is to kill living organisms. When we consume water containing chlorine, it kills some part of us, destroying cells and tissue inside our body. Dr. Robert Carlson, a highly respected University of Minnesota researcher whose work is sponsored by the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, sums it up by claiming , "the chlorine problem is similar to that of air pollution", and adds that "chlorine is the greatest crippler and killer of modern times!"

Breast cancer, which now affects one in every eight women in North America, has recently been linked to the accumulation of chlorine compounds in the breast tissue. A study carried out in Hartford Connecticut, the first of its kind in North America, found that, "women with breast cancer have 50% to 60% higher levels of organochlorines (chlorination byproducts) in their breast tissue than women without breast cancer."

One of the most shocking components to all of these studies is that up to 2/3s of our harmful exposure to chlorine is due to inhalation of steam and skin absorption while showering. A **warm shower** opens up the pores of the skin and allows for accelerated absorption of chlorine and other chemicals in water. The steam we **inhale** while showering can contain up to 50 times the level of chemicals than tap water due to the fact that chlorine and most other contaminants vaporize much faster and at a lower temperature than water. Inhalation is a much more harmful means of exposure since the chlorine gas (chloroform) we inhale goes directly into our blood stream. When we **drink** contaminated water the toxins are partially filtered out by our kidneys and digestive system. Chlorine vapors are known to be a strong irritant to the sensitive tissue and bronchial passages inside our lungs, it was used as a chemical weapon in World War II. The **inhalation** of chlorine is a suspected cause of asthma and bronchitis, especially in children… which has increased 300% in the last two decades. "Showering is suspected as the primary cause of elevated levels of chloroform in nearly every home because of chlorine in the water." Dr Lance Wallace, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Chlorine in shower water also has a very negative cosmetic effect, robbing our skin and hair of moisture and elasticity, resulting in a less vibrant and youthful appearance. Anyone who has ever swam in a chlorinated pool can relate to the harsh effects that chlorine has on the skin and hair. What's surprising is that we commonly find higher levels of chlorine in our tap water than is recommended safe for swimming pools.

The good news is that chlorine is one of the easiest substances to remove from our water. For that reason it logically should serve its purpose of keeping our water free from harmful bacteria and water borne diseases right up to the time of consumption, where it should then be removed by quality home water filtration.

No one will argue that chlorine serves an important purpose, and that the hazards of doing away with chlorine are greater than or equal to the related health risks. The simple truth is that chlorine is likely here to stay. The idea that we could do away with chlorine any time in the near future is just not realistic. It is also clear that chlorine represents a very real and serious threat to our health and should be removed in our homes, at the point of use, both from the water we drink and the water we shower in.

REFERENCES

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