

On this and the following page are two articles which give us examples of lack of publicity about chemicals used in cosmetics and food products, and also highlight examples of animals being used in such tests!

DEODORANTS AND PARABENS

PARABENS are chemicals widely used as preservatives in cosmetics and certain food types. The proper chemical name is para-hydroxybenzoic acid alkyl ester and there are several different types in common use namely:

methyl/ethyl/propyl/butyl/isobutyl paraben. Parabens are chemicals ultimately derived from a petroleum or crude oil base.

Parabens are found in anti-perspirants/deodorants preparations, and cosmetics such as moisturisers, perfumes, shampoos and shower gels as well as in certain types of pickles, fruit pie fillings, jams and beers.

Recent research carried out by the Brunel University shows that parabens are oestrogenic, which means they can mimic the female oestrogen in tests carried out in the laboratory and on female rats. The animal study showed that butyl paraben can increase the weight of the uterus in immature female rats, which is usually a good indicator of a substance being oestrogenic.

There has been relatively little, if any, research done on the cumulative, long term low exposures to Parabens. According to Professor Sumpter from Brunel University "What we really want to know is what effects may come from low exposures over a long period of time. That is realistic exposure mechanism". Cosmetics manufacturers have no plans to study parabens and are confident that they cannot enter the blood stream through the skin.

The fact that women are applying several different substances to their skin, which contain these products on a daily basis, is a worry. In terms of anti-perspirant/deodorant use, daily application under the arms may be linked to breast cancer. Dr. Phillipa Darbre of Reading University is currently publishing a paper of a study into the effects of parabens on growth of human breast cancer cells. She knows enough for her (and her teenage daughters) to have stopped using underarm cosmetics.

There are two current theories as to why antiperspirant etc. use may be linked to breast cancer. Firstly, it has been suggested

that by using anti-perspirants we are effectively blocking sweat glands, which may lead to a build up of toxins in the breast area. Other components of deodorants such as synthetic fragrances and perfumes may also be toxic to humans but little is known of their effects.

Neither of these theories is currently backed up by published research, but we do know enough to urge caution in the use of these substances especially as these chemicals are in such a variety of products used so routinely and often targeted at women.

The Editor, Janette Ferguson

SO, WHAT CAN WE DO?

- 1** Read the labels and avoid using products that contain any of the above mentioned parabens.
- 2** Remember certain products may not list all the ingredients.
- 3** Contact the manufacturer for more information. (Unfortunately even products labelled organic/herbal/natural may still contain parabens).
- 4** Avoid using deodorants or cosmetics you are not sure about. Try soap and water instead of deodorant, or try some of the alternatives. Shower gels can also contain parabens.
- 5** Write to the manufacturers to highlight your concerns about cosmetics that contain these substances, remember the cosmetics industry is a very lucrative market aimed largely at women, so if you avoid a product you are affecting the company's profits. Don't just stop buying, write and tell them why!

WOMEN'S HEALTH

YES, ANTI-PERSPIRANT

SOME time ago I attended a Breast Cancer awareness seminar organised by Terry Birk and supported by Dan Sullivan.

During a Q&A period, I asked why the most common area for breast cancer was near the armpit? My question was not answered at that time but since then I have discovered some evidence which suggests breast cancer is caused by a concentration of toxins which can lead to cell mutations a.k.a. cancer.

Most of the products out there are an anti-perspirant / deodorant combination, so go home and check. Deodorant is fine, anti-perspirant is not.

The human body has a few areas that it uses to purge toxins from the body; behind the knees, behind the ears, the groin area and armpits.

The toxins are purged in the form of perspiration. Anti-perspirant, as the name clearly indicates, prevents you from perspiring, thereby inhibiting the body from purging toxins from below the armpits. These toxins do not just magically disappear. Instead, the body deposits them in the lymph nodes below the arms since it cannot sweat them out.

Nearly all breast cancer tumours occur in the upper outside quadrant of the breast area. This is precisely where the lymph nodes are located. Additionally, men are less likely (but not completely exempt) from developing breast cancer prompted by anti-perspirant usage because most of the anti-perspirant product is caught in their hair and is not directly applied to skin.

Women who apply anti-perspirant right after shaving increase the risk further because shaving causes almost imperceptible nicks in the skin, which gives the chemicals the entrance into the body from the armpit area.

PLEASE pass this along to anyone you care about. Breast cancer is becoming frighteningly common.

This awareness may save lives. If you are sceptical about these findings, I urge you to do some research for yourself, you may just arrive at the same conclusions!

The Editor, Janette Ferguson

A woman's right to choose

LIAM Fox's controversial stance on abortion reflects the growing influence of the Conservative Christian Fellowship (CCF) that extends up to the highest ranks of today's Tory party. The 10 year old fellowship, listing Ann Widdicombe among its members, reflects the growing influence of the religious right in the United States, fundamentalists who have considerable clout in the Republican Party. Some in the shadow cabinet have called for a more liberal approach to social issues but clearly a large number of senior Tories agree with a tougher line

George Bush promised on the election trail to restore a "culture of life" in the United States. On his first day in the White House he kept his word plunging rapidly into the

A statement of support (for the anti-abortion protesters) by Mr Bush was read to the crowd

country's longstanding conflict on abortion. White House aides said the new President had decided to block US funds for any international family planning groups that offer abortion or abortion counselling as part of their services to expectant mothers. This decision means that groups like the London based International Planned Parenthood Federation, a collection of more than a hundred organisations world wide, could stand to lose millions of dollars in funding.


A spokeswoman for IPPF said US funding of up to £15 million – 10% of their total budget could be affected. Mr Bush's decision, one of his first presidential acts was made on a day 10 anti-abortion protesters were arrested at a rally in Washington. They were protesting a recent decision by officials of Clinton's administration to approve the RU-486 abortion pill for US use.

A statement of support by Mr Bush was read to the crowd.

The march also coincided with the 28th anniversary of Roe v Wade, the landmark US supreme court ruling that wrote a

AS BUSH STARTS U.S. BACKLASH..

Tories declare abortions war



INTO BATTLE: A "pro-life" campaigner joins a big anti-abortion demo in Washington this week

Country	Abortions	Population
UK	176,300	61.7m
USA	1,450,000	265.2m
Germany	190,000	80.3m
Canada	20,000	31.7m
Italy	618,537	57.8m
France	13,670	60.7m
Norway	2,880,000	4.8m
Spain	80,578	38.1m
Sweden	947,526	8.5m
Holland	33,250	15.2m
Hungary	84,884	10.8m
Poland	3,171	38.4m
Brazil	1,468,908	17.8m
Canada	108,000	31.7m
New Zealand	18,200	3.5m
Japan	337,700	124.8m

UK: Figures for England and Wales only. SOURCE: Alex Gidycz/Case Institute, 1997

AID BANG: Bush asked fast

PRAYERS: Tories' Uzi Fox

woman's right to terminate a pregnancy into constitutional law. The US Christian Right has hopes of overturning that ruling under the new Bush administration.

Mr Bush's most controversial cabinet pick is Senator John Ashcroft who as a Republican Senator in Missouri proposed a constitutional amendment that would outlaw nearly all abortions, including cases of rape and incest. He also opposes most forms of contraception.

Kate Michelman head of the National Abortion Rights League, called this an aggressive assault on women's rights and "a harbinger of things to come" and an all out campaign to turn back decades of work by women to win control over their own

'Although we are part of the UK, Northern Ireland did not adopt the 1967 Act and its still a grey area here. That's why women who can afford to, travel to England for terminations'

bodies.

Franca Tranza, spokeswoman for family planning charity Marie Stopes International, added the majority of sensible people in Britain will support a woman's right to choose on this issue and this point has been proved in poll after poll.

A spokeswoman from the Northern Ireland Family Planning Association, said "although we are part of the UK, Northern Ireland did not adopt the 1967 Act and it's still a grey area here. That's why women who can afford to, travel to England for terminations. The links between Bush's Republican party and the Tory party have been further strengthened through religious groups and also a new group called the Atlantic Bridge. Dr. Fox and senior Conservative Central Office staff, make regular trips to the States to explore ideas with US counterparts.

THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION POLICY

A Woman's Right to Choose

The following emergency resolution was passed at Annual Conference:

Conference notes the recent visit from America of Operation Rescue to picket abortion clinics here in Britain.

Conference believes women should be allowed abortion on demand and condemns the cuts within the NHS, which are making it more

difficult for working class women to have these abortions.

Conference calls on all delegates to oppose any anti – abortion legislation or demonstration whether by Operation Rescue, SPUC, LIFE, or any other anti-abortion group that is set up and also resolves to affiliate to NAC (National Abortion Campaign).

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