Pesticides: The Steep Price of Perfection



I am passionate about this subject. And while I have a strong feeling that you are not an indiscriminate user of pesticides, you very well may be concerned that your neighbors and loved ones haven't yet seen the light.

So, I need to take a step away from my usual blog subjects to give you the fodder you need in order to inform those you love.

Granted, this post is unusually long and dense.

I wanted to provide you with as many resources as I possibly could so that you can tailor your conversations to the specific concerns of each friend or relative who still uses

pesticides. There are many reasons not to use toxic chemicals, but only you will know which reason will most deeply resonate with your loved ones. Together, we can stop the poisoning of our planet – one lawn at a time.

Note: if you know someone who is currently experiencing an adverse reaction to pesticide exposure, please refer to my previous blog, Three Homeopathic Remedies for Pesticide Exposure.

It's summer. Time for backyard barbecues or picnics in the park.

In our winter imaginations, many envisioned their summer yards and parks as manicured fields of green, inviting grass, lush foliage and brightly-colored flowers – that endless bed of green with only our desired plants and no pesky insects.

Perfection.

But at a price – a stark-raving-scary price.

Giving up our idealized versions of green spaces is hard. But pesticides (to kill bugs and rodents) and herbicides (to kill weeds) are filled with uncertain risks, making the entire world their guinea pig!

Concerns abound that pesticides and herbicides are hazardous to animals. A Harvard study strongly links pesticide use to the mass-damage or complete disappearance of bee colonies (Colony Collapse Disorder).

If this collapse remains unchecked, without bees to pollinate crops, our food supply could be gravely affected.

Also, birds and amphibians are affected by the pesticides we spray – both directly, and by eating their prey that have been poisoned. Fish are affected by the pesticides contained in the runoff from our lawns into the waterways and oceans.

And, our beloved little dogs are subject to increased risk of nasal and bladder cancers when exposed to lawns that have been treated. Would you willingly do something hazardous to your little pet?

Of course, you wouldn't. (But, I have your attention now, don't I?)

You might ask, "Aren't they're registered with the EPA and FDA? So, they're safe for humans, right?"

Sure, they may be registered. But that does *NOT* mean these chemicals have undergone adequate safety testing. Here's a sobering statistic from BeyondPesticides.org: "Fourteen of the 36 most commonly used residential pesticides are probable or possible carcinogens, 15 are connected to birth defects, 21 with reproductive problems, 22 with liver or kidney damage, 24 with neurotoxicity, and 34 are sensitizers and/or irritants." A UCLA study linked pesticides to Parkinson's disease. The Ontario College of Family Physicians published a paper linking pesticides to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia and tumors (stomach, renal, pancreatic, lung, ovarian, breast, prostate and brain cancers).

Did *that* make you sit up straight?

If not, how about this? The elderly, pregnant woman and our children may be even *MORE* sensitive to the effects of pesticide and herbicide exposure. The National Academy of Science had this to say: "A fundamental maxim of pediatric medicine is that children are not 'little adults.' Profound differences exist between children and adults. Infants and children are growing and developing. Their metabolic rates

are more rapid than those of adults. There are differences in their ability to activate, detoxify, and excrete xenobiotic compounds. All these differences can affect the toxicity of pesticides in infants and children, and for these reasons, the toxicity of pesticides is frequently different in children and adults." A study showed autism and developmental disorders can be linked to the mother's proximity (exposure) to pesticides during pregnancy.

That *had* to get your attention.

But let me put it in plain language: We are adversely affecting our children so that we may have green, critter-free, golf course-quality lawns.

Seriously?

An article in Men's Health reported this regarding pesticides: "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tested more than 9,000 people about 9 years ago, and the scientists found pesticides– or the products created when the body breaks them down–in everyone they tested, according to a summary by the Pesticide Action Network, a group advocating alternatives to pesticides. Among people whose blood and urine was tested, 13 different pesticides were found in the average person's body. At least half the people tested had 18 pesticides in their bodies. Concentrations generally rose the younger the person was."

When I read that, I translate it to mean *we are becoming the pesticides that we spray*! Our bodies are absorbing it at alarming rates; assimilating it.

Forgive me for shouting, but WHAT ARE WE DOING TO OURSELVES??

We think we're merely using atrazine to kill weeds? But at the same time, we're causing endocrine disruption and increased risk of breast and prostate cancer. (Adding insult

to injury, atrazine also interferes with the drugs used to *treat* breast and prostate cancer!) We think we're killing fire ants by using bifenthrin? But, we're also overstimulating electrical signals in human nerve cells increasing the risk of tremors and paralysis (not to mention that it is also a potential carcinogen).

And then we reach for the Roundup.

It's everywhere. No Home Depot or Lowe's garden department is without it. And what a seemingly friendly name it has – "Roundup." Sounds like a Saturday morning cartoon.

Well, there is nothing friendly about it. Roundup is glyphosate. Glyphosate kills unwanted plants by interfering with an enzyme used in the synthesis of amino acids the plants need to live. Humans don't produce that enzyme, so Monsanto, the manufacturer, tells us that Glyphosate (Roundup) is safe.

I beg to differ!

(And so do a lot of authoritative individuals and organizations. See links below.)

The problem is, the beneficial bacteria in our guts DO REQUIRE that enzyme that Roundup kills. When the glyphosate (Roundup) is absorbed in our systems by our good bacteria – they die. Dead. You know humans *need* those good bacteria to live a healthy life. Minerals, vitamins and nutrients we ingest are no longer properly absorbed, leading to deficiencies. Glyphosate inhibits enzymes that help our bodies detoxify harmful chemicals in our systems. Our natural gut flora is disrupted, which may lead to disorders resulting from gut dysbiosis (such as gluten-intolerance, IBS, Crohn's Disease, chronic inflammation, auto-immune disease and allergies).

We risk all that – so we don't have to look at weeds.

What sense does that make?

The active ingredients of these lawn treatments are not even the entire danger. Nathan Diegelman said in his treatise, Poison in The Grass: The Hazards and Consequences of Lawn Pesticides, "Many components are classified as "inert," which allows them to be kept hidden from the public and not listed on product labels. These are more than just fillers or solvents. "Inert" does not mean "inactive" – some, such as benzene and xylene, are more toxic than listed chemicals." Scientific American's article, Weed-Whacking Herbicide Proves Deadly to Human Cells reported on the conclusions of recent studies: the inert ingredients in the product can *increase* the adverse effects.

Roundup has been declared a possible human carcinogen by the United Nations, and other influential nations have begun to ban the use of it. Yet it is still widely used in the United States – if not by you, then by your neighbors or your community.

How do we avoid exposure to glyphosate? Biofoundations.org published the following advice in their excellent article (previously mentioned):

- ***"Avoid using Roundup and other similar products.***
- ***Avoid consumption of GMO foods which are directly contaminated with glyphosate.***
- ***Avoid animal products such as milk or meat for which GMO foods were used to feed the animals.***
- ***Eat organic foods as much as possible.***
- ***Avoid living in areas where glyphosate is applied."***

If you find that you experience a reaction to the pesticides or herbicides sprayed by others, Homeopathy is here to help – as always. Read my blog, 3 Homeopathic Remedies for Pesticide Exposure and listen to my podcast, The Worst Kind of Pollution.

You know me. I'm not one to use scare tactics, but this is *genuinely* scary. I've been involved in the fight against the indiscriminate spraying of pesticides and herbicides since my children were small. In fact, I facilitated change in public policy in my town of Buffalo, NY – the first American city to stand against the use of these harmful chemicals. But, the fight seemingly never ends. I was reminded of this recently in Florida when my neighborhood association began spraying for bugs! The fight must go on. Californians are fighting against Monsanto, and we each need to do what we can in our communities as well.

But, as with most causes sometimes the fight begins in our own backyards – this time literally. I know this can be a bone of contention between husbands and wives. Our husbands may seem as though they're in competition with the golf courses on television – trying to achieve that perfection. Perhaps you've wanted to have this conversation but were not adequately armed with information. Below are some additional links to helpful organizations to support you in your efforts:

National Pesticide Information Center

Beyond Pesticides.org

And here are a few educational articles to assist you in fact-finding:

Pesticides Increasingly Threaten Human Health

Bad News About Pesticides

Reducing Residential Exposure to Pesticides

Also, to help you start the conversation with others, this week instead of a free remedy card to download, I would like to share with you a free video – containing all this information and much more.

Sit down with your family and watch it; then decide if the perfect green lawn is worth the risk. Do what you can to protect your family in public spaces as well. We mothers must band together and present this information to our local authorities.

We *can* fight City Hall. In fact, the city of Portland, Maine has recently banned pesticides and toxic chemicals. Pardon the pun, but this is indeed a "grassroots" movement, and it up to each of us to do our parts.

Warmly.



P.S. Consider doing as my husband Perry does to keep our stone walkways free of weeds. Instead of pulling them, he sprays them with a concentrated solution of salt (the kind used for melting snow on wintery streets and sidewalks). He admits it requires repetition – about once weekly during the heaviest growing season. But, he reminds me that it only takes about five minutes as a part of his weekly lawn care.

Vinegar can also be a very effective weed control. Howard Garrett, also known as The Dirt Doctor, shared his recipe for a vinegar-based herbicide. (This spray will injure any plant it touches, so use it only on those you want to remove):

Vinegar-based Herbicide Formula

- *"1 gallon of 10 percent (100 grain) vinegar*
- *Add 1 ounce orange oil or d-limonene*

- *Add 1 tablespoon molasses (optional – some say it doesn't help)*
- *1 teaspoon liquid soap or other surfactant (such as Bio Wash)*
- *Do not add water"*

P.P.S. Gut dysbiosis has become such a prevalent problem in our society; I created a course strictly devoted to this subject. I've given you a wealth of free information in my blog posts and podcasts, but if your family's issues require you deepen your education, please consider taking my course, *Good Gut, Bad Gut*. First, throw away your lawn chemicals, and then learn more about the course by clicking here.