

Non-Stick Cookware Continues to Prove Its Toxicity

Posted By [Dr. Mercola](#) | March 06 2008

More evidence has emerged regarding the dangers of Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA), which is used in the production of non-stick cookware and stain-resistant snack food packaging. PFOA is currently found in the bloodstream of 95 percent of American men, women, and children.

Now, a study has shown a correlation between PFOA and low birth weight in newborns. One of the head researchers in the independent study, Dr. Lynn Goldman, said that, "It appears that there is a relation between a higher level of exposure and lower birth weight, as well as the circumference of the head."

Another recent study showed that PFOA caused an overreaction to allergens in mice.

PFOA has already been implicated in increased instances of cancer in the pancreas, liver, testicles, and mammary glands, as well as miscarriages, thyroid problems, weakened immune systems, and low organ weights.

A growing community of scientists believe the largest concentration of PFOA comes from the telomers used to make the stain and grease repellent coatings for fast food containers, apparel, and carpeting.

Sources:

» [Organic Consumers Association February 14, 2008](#)

It's been exactly 70 years since non-stick coating was first introduced, and we're now reaping what was sowed -- most Americans test positive for PFOA in their blood, which the EPA has just recently identified as a likely human carcinogen.

Talk about being a day late and a dollar short.

Since its creation in 1938, non-stick coating has been added to countless household and personal care products besides non-stick cookware, such as:

- Clothing (Gore-Tex jackets and other apparel)
- Nail polish removers
- Eyeglasses
- Products designed to repel soil, grease and water, such as carpet and furniture treatments
- Pizza boxes, microwave popcorn, and other non-stick food wraps
- Protective sprays for leather, shoes, and clothing
- Paint
- Cleaning products

As an unregulated and untested chemical, non-stick coating gained wide distribution before scientists began looking into its impact on human health.

Now we know that simple acts like vacuuming carpeting with the "stain-resistant" claim will release the chemical into the air to be circulated in your home.

In another frightening example, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) looked at microwaveable popcorn packaging and found that PFOA is not only present in the inner coating of the bag, but that it migrates to the oil from the packaging during heating.

At this point PFOA is so prevalent that even many of your sources of [drinking water have been contaminated](#).

Why is Non-Stick Cookware so Bad For Your Health?

[Non-stick cookware](#) has become enormously popular because of its convenience factor; foods don't stick to the surface.

However, it has now been shown that once heated – which is bound to happen when cooking – non-stick pans will quickly reach temperatures at which toxic fumes are released.

The coating begins to break down and release toxins into the air at a temperature of only 446 degrees Fahrenheit.

After about three to five minutes of heating, when the pans reach 680 degrees, they release **at least six toxic gasses**, including:

- Two carcinogens
- Two global pollutants
- MFA, a chemical deadly to humans at low doses

The leading non-stick cookware brand was found to reach 721°F in five minutes under the same conditions.

Now, if you heat your non-stick cookware to 1,000°F, a temperature that scientists from the leading non-stick cookware brand have measured from stovetop drip pans, **the coatings will break down into a *chemical warfare agent* known as PFIB, and a chemical analog of the WWI "*choking agent*" phosgene gas.**

That puts a whole new spin on “healthy home cooking,” doesn't it?

The Many Health Hazards of PFOA

In animal studies, [PFOA](#) (sometimes also referred to as C8), which is the chemical that makes Teflon-coated aluminum slippery and non-stick, were found to cause:

- Serious changes in organs including the brain, prostate, liver, thymus, and kidneys, showing toxicity.
- Death of several rat pups that were exposed to PFOA.
- Changes in the pituitary in female rats, at all doses. The pituitary controls growth, reproduction, and many metabolic functions. Changes in the size of the pituitary are considered an indication of toxicity.
- An association with tumors in at least four different organs in animal tests.
- An increase in prostate cancer in PFOA plant workers.

Other unrelated studies have also found evidence of [birth defects in babies](#) from PFOA-exposed workers. In 1981, two out of seven women who worked at a non-stick coating plant gave birth to babies with birth defects.

How Do You Detox From PFOA?

That's one of the most unfortunate parts of this mess. You can't -- at least not quickly.

We now know that once PFOA is released into the environment, it doesn't break down quickly and disappear. According to Tim Kropp, a toxicologist with the Environmental Working Group, even if a person exposed to PFOA cuts off all future exposure, it still takes up to 20 years for the body to get rid of that initial contamination.

Other research has shown that four years after exposure, PFOA blood levels were still only reduced by half.

How to Reduce Your Exposure

Needless to say, your best bet is to pay attention to the products you use, in particular when it comes to your cookware. The best choice out there, in my opinion -- and the one that I personally use -- is a new high tech [ceramic cookware](#). Glass cookware is also a suitable alternative, but I feel that ceramic cookware is a much better option.

Ceramic cookware is not only extremely durable and easy to clean (even the toughest cooked-on foods can be wiped away after soaking it in warm water), it is completely inert, which means it won't release any harmful chemicals into your home or your food unlike other sets of cookware. Below is a short table depicting hazardous cookware and why it should be avoided.

Cookware Material	Potential Hazards
Non-Stick	PFOA induced potential health hazards -- from your immune system to birthing activities
Aluminum	Is a reactive metal and suspected casual factor in Alzheimer's disease
Stainless steel	Potential likelihood of metal leaching into your food and allergen issues
Copper	Due to the possibility of copper caused discomfort, recommended to never have direct contact with your food

Additionally, avoid French fries, candy bars, pizza, and microwave popcorn, where non-stick coatings are commonly used. Fortunately, once you're on the path of optimal health, these are items you probably wouldn't touch anyway.

Related Links:

- » [It's Official: Teflon is a "Likely" Carcinogen](#)
- » [Teflon is in Your Food Packaging and You Don't Even Know It](#)
- » [Warning: Teflon Can Cause Birth Defects & Infertility](#)