

## Hazards of some modern conveniences

*Several products we use today make life more convenient. However, we do not actually consider the ramifications to our health and environment.*

**Cell phones:** Today, cell phones are a vital part of our life. Many scientific studies have investigated possible health hazards of mobile phone radiation, especially damage to the brain. Cell phones, cell towers and the electromagnetic frequencies impact our health adversely. It is best to restrict the use of cell phones.



**Teflon:** Teflon coated non-stick cookware helps you cook food using less oil and cleaning them is easier. But, at what cost? According to research, a chemical that is released when you heat up Teflon to high temperatures causes cancer and birth defects. Compounds in such cookware may be associated with elevated cholesterol levels in children and teens. Also, Teflon is not biodegradable.

**Leaded fuel:** Lead emissions from motor vehicles contribute to air pollution in urban areas. Each time we are exposed to lead some of it is stored in our bodies. Lead has serious health impacts as it impairs development of brain function in children. Long-term exposure can lead to anemia, neurological disturbances like headache, lethargy and even cancer.



**Styrofoam:** It is widely used for making cups, plates and other packaging material. But environmentalists have shown their concern about this material. Not only is petroleum required in manufacture, but Styrofoam takes ages to decompose. It is not good for health either. It can release potentially toxic breakdown products when heated. Low concentrations of harmful chemicals may get mixed in your food or drink as a result.

**Plastics:** Plastics are light, flexible and useful in making several products. But, only a fraction of all plastic bags is recycled. Most wind up in landfills. Plastic wastes can break down and release toxins that harm the environment, animals and human life. Chemicals such as BPA and phthalates, used to make plastics more pliable and resistant to degrading, can interfere with hormone levels.



**Amalgams:** They are alloys of mercury with various metals used for dental fillings. They contain more than 50% mercury. Dentists have used mercury-based amalgams for over 150 years and believe that it is safe because the mercury becomes inert when bonded with the other metals (silver, tin, copper and zinc). However, there have been concerns that the fillings may release mercury vapour. Mercury is more poisonous than lead and, when released in the body, can settle in the central nervous system, kidneys, brain and other organs. In extreme cases, amalgam fillings have even been linked to multiple sclerosis, autism and Alzheimer's disease.

**High-fructose corn syrup:** It is used as a sweetener instead of sugar in processed foods and beverages such as soft drinks, jams, jellies and even bread. There are concerns that high fructose corn syrup may contribute to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

**Sources:** *Discovery health, www.livestrong.com, www.dailymail.co.uk, www.webmd.com, www.ehow.com, Wikipedia*