

New resource on health threats posed by endocrine-disrupting chemicals

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As governments, industry and public interest groups from across the globe prepare to meet next week to discuss endocrine-disrupting chemicals and other international chemical safety issues, the Endocrine Society and IPEN released a new guide documenting the threat endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) pose to human health.

"There is good reason to suspect that increasing chemical production and use is related to the growing incidence of endocrine-associated disorders over the past 20 years, including male reproductive problems, early female puberty, cancers and neurobehavioral disorders," said Endocrine Society member Andrea C. Gore, PhD, the guide's lead author.

"Importantly, there is growing evidence that fetuses and children have a particular vulnerability to these chemicals. Introduction to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals was written to help policymakers and others better understand how these chemicals work and to assist them in making informed policy decisions."

EDCs and other chemicals will be one topic of discussion when policymakers and other stakeholders meet in Geneva, Switzerland Dec. 15-17 to discuss next steps on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), a global chemical safety policy framework. More than 100 countries are participating in the process organized mainly by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with contributions from the World Health Organization (WHO).

"In Geneva next week, the international community will decide how to

respond to regional recommendations and growing stakeholder concerns about EDCs. Some of our goals for the meeting include new initiatives to identify potential EDCs and safer alternatives including non-chemical alternatives, more awareness-raising about the hazards of EDCs, and steps toward translating research results into control actions," said Olga Speranskaya, PhD and IPEN co-chair.

In 2012, the international community adopted a consensus resolution that identified [endocrine-disrupting chemicals](#) (EDCs) as an emerging policy issue. Scientific studies have linked EDC exposure to rising rates of male birth defects, infertility, cancer, obesity and neurobehavioral disorders. Nearly every person has been exposed to EDCs, which are found in plastics, foods, pesticides, cosmetics, electronics and building materials.

Over the past year, more than 140 governments from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean recognized the special vulnerability of children during critical periods of development and declared the need for more awareness, information and monitoring of EDCs including in children's products, pesticides, electronics, building materials and textiles. Governments also called for a list of potential EDCs and their associated health effects along with safer substitutes including non-[chemical](#) alternatives.

More information: www.endocrine.org/edcguide

Provided by The Endocrine Society

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