

RACHEL'S FRIENDS

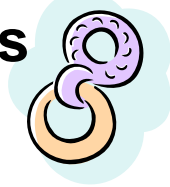
BREAST CANCER COALITION

Phthalates Researcher to Speak on Endocrine-Disrupting Hormones

Shanna Swan, PhD

Tuesday, April 17, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

Portland State University, Smith Memorial Center, 1825 SW Broadway,
Room 338. \$10 donation suggested, but not required.



by Leanne Park, RN
Rachel's Friends intern

Phthalates are chemicals found in common products, such as toys and teething rings, cosmetics, and drugs. These "endocrine disruptors" can interfere with hormones that control gender. Research links phthalates to breast and testicular cancer and abnormal genital development in male fetuses.

Shanna Swan, PhD, an Obstetrics and Gynecology professor at University of Rochester NY School of Medicine and Dentistry, was the first researcher to find a link between higher phthalate levels in pregnant women and abnormal genital development in their newborn sons. (Estimated daily phthalate

exposures in a population of mothers of male infants exhibiting reduced anogenital distance. *Environ Health Perspect.* 2006 June;114[6]:805-9).

Dr. Swan will discuss implications of her research and ways to limit exposure. Her work has contributed to a nationwide focus on health risks posed by environmental chemicals. She recommends precautions for avoiding harmful chemicals (see page 2).

Dr. Swan sees mixed results in effective chemical reform. She assesses current phthalate levels in Americans as "either constant ... or going up. On the other hand, several hospitals and many cosmetic manufacturers have phased out phtha-

lates, so I think the message is getting there. Gradually, I think, our exposures [will go] down."

Dr. Swan strongly supports consumer choice in their purchases; however, she believes consumers need better information. She advocates for clear and truthful labels on all products containing phthalates. Phthalates in flavorings and fragrances are not labeled. She champions more funding to research the impact of phthalates on public health. "We need a total exposure assessment to be able to [identify] major sources of phthalates," she said.

Join us on April 17 and learn about toxic chemicals in everyday products.

Precautions Recommended by Shanna Swan

Buy PVC-free plastic wrap and never let it contact food. Better yet, use waxed paper.

Use microwaveable glass and ceramic cookware. Don't microwave food in plastic containers or on Styrofoam trays.

Choose containers made of phthalate-free polyethylene. The *Smart Plastics Guide* (www.agobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=77083) recommends containers with recycling codes 1, 2, 4 (poly-ethylene), or 5 (polypropylene).

Avoid codes 3 (polyvinyl chloride), which contains phthalates, 6 (polystyrene), and 7. Most 7's are polycarbonate with bisphenol A (BPA). BPA can mimic sex hormones, even in small doses leached from heated plastic or from exposure to acidic foods (tomatoes) or strong detergents.

When you're building or remodeling, avoid PVC vinyl materials that will add phthalates to your indoor environment.

Lower breast cancer incidence in US linked to less use of hormone replacement therapy

Using data from the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance Epidemiology and End Results ([SEER](http://seer.cancer.gov)) database, researchers found an overall 7% decrease in breast cancer incidence in the United States from August 2002 through December 2003.

Older women with estrogen receptor positive breast cancer showed the largest drop in incidence rate (12%). Researchers and activists link the drop

with the fact that many post-menopausal women stopped taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) after the [Women's Health Initiative](http://www.womenshealthinitiative.org) results were released in 2002.

That study found that estrogen combined with progestin increased the risk of breast cancer, but taking estrogen alone had an "uncertain" effect on breast cancer risk.

For more information, visit [Medline Plus](http://www.medlineplus.gov).

Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition is a non-profit all-volunteer Oregon advocacy organization dedicated to lowering the incidence of breast and other cancers by reducing our exposure to environmental carcinogens. We do this through education, legislative action, and organizing for change on behalf of Oregonians.

We honor Rachel Carson, a biologist and writer who died of breast cancer. Her 1962 book *Silent Spring* exposed the dangers of pesticides.

We support the **Precautionary Principle (better safe than sorry)**. We should act **now** to reduce our exposure to known and suspected carcinogens even if cause and effect relationships are not firmly established.

Board of Directors

Diane Lund-Muzikant, Chair
Nancy Crumpacker, MD
Phil Goldsmith; Karen Gritzka, RN; Myra Himmelfarb; Rita McDonagh; Joanne Skirving
Intern: Leanne Park, RN

Rachel's Friends Breast
Cancer Coalition
P.O. Box 82509
Portland, OR 97282
Voice: 503-292-1035
info@rachelsfriends.org
www.rachelsfriends.org

Please join us

Annual membership \$ 35.00
Supporters 100.00
Patrons 500.00
Students & seniors 20.00
Sponsors 250.00
Benefactors 1000.00

Mail a check for your dues with your name, mailing address, day phone, and e-mail to the address shown above.

Ecological Medicine: Healing the Earth, Healing Ourselves.

Edited by Kenny Ausubel with J.P. Harpignies, Sierra Club Books, 2004

Book Review by Karen Gritzka, RN, Rachel's Friends board member

Part of the Sierra Club's Bioneers Series, this book collects presentations from annual Bioneers conferences and other essays. Contributors include Charlotte Brody, cofounder of Health Care Without Harm; Samuel Epstein, author of **The Politics of Cancer** and **Cancer-Gate: How to Win the Losing Cancer War**; Michael Lerner, author of **Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer**; Mary O'Brien of Eugene, OR, author of

Making Better Environmental Decisions: An Alternative to Risk Assessment; Carolyn Raffensperger, author of **Protecting Public Health and the Environment: Implementing the Precautionary Principle**; and Andrew Weil, author of **Natural Health, Natural Medicine**.

The writers discuss the dependence of human health on the health of our environment and describe "ecological medicine." Ausubel defines ecological medicine as "a unifying field that embodies the recognition

that human health and environmental health are inseparable. Ecological medicine shifts the emphasis from the individual to public health: from nutrition to the food web and farming systems; from a human centered viewpoint to biodiversity and other ecosystem services that are the foundations of health and healthy economies. It is founded in the precautionary principle . . ."

I found the book hopeful because it helps to bridge the gap between medicine and the environment by talking about true preventative medicine.

Anti-toxics legislation headed for 2007 Oregon legislature

Rachel's Friends has endorsed the Oregon Toxic Alliance's two proposed laws that the 2007 Oregon legislature may consider:

- Create protective buffer zones around schools, day care centers, parks and campgrounds where aerial, dusting or air blast pesticide spray is banned.
- Strengthen Oregon's rural residential notification requirements for aerial application of herbicides in forests. This "right-to-know" law would help advance the policy of "pesticide as a last resort."

Rachel's Friends is pursuing legislation to ban the sale in Oregon of cosmetics and personal care products containing phthalates. Watch our Web site for updates.



Rachel's Friends
P.O. Box 82509
Portland, OR 97282

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 1047
Portland, OR

Return Service Requested

Calendar

Look for Rachel's Friends' table:

- Sunday, **March 4, Portland International Women's Day**, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., **FREE**, Portland State University, Smith Memorial Student Union, 1825 SW Broadway, Room 355. www.piwd.org
- Saturday, **March 10, Issues After Breast Cancer® Conference**, 8:00 a.m. - 4:15 p.m., \$30, Oregon Convention Center, registration deadline: March 3, Educational conference for survivors, family, and others affected by breast cancer. www.komenoregon.org/Events/Issues_After_Breast_Cancer.shtml
- Friday, **June 8, Oregon Cancer Summit 2007**, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., **FREE**, Oregon Convention Center, Portland. Learn about preventing cancer, survivorship, and community-based cancer care. Contact 971-673-0984 or www.healthoregon.org/cancer or patricia.schoonmaker@state.or.us

Thank you!

To all of you who recently joined Rachel's Friends or renewed your annual membership — thanks for your support. We appreciate your generosity and look forward to working with you to end breast cancer.

Gift in memory

From the Liberson/Salomon family, in memory of "your mother" to the Fendel family