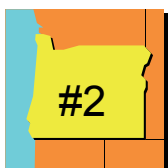


RACHEL'S FRIENDS

BREAST CANCER COALITION

Why do Oregon and Wash. have consistently high breast cancer rates?

We have a lot to learn about who gets breast cancer and why. But one statistic is a persistent mystery:



Why do Oregon and Washington consistently rank in the top five states for invasive breast cancer?

Breast cancer incidence means the percentage of women with breast cancer per 100,000 women in a state. In 2004 (the most recent year for which federal data are available), Massachusetts has the highest rate (134 per 100,000 women),

followed by Oregon (OR), Washington (WA), Rhode Island and Connecticut. In 2003, WA was first and OR ranked second.

In both states, incidence is highest along Interstate 5. In 2005, incidence was significantly higher than the state average in Oregon's Clackamas and Marion counties and significantly lower in Douglas County (Roseburg) and in northeast and southeast Oregon.

One theory cites OR's and WA's higher rates of mammograms and early diagnosis. That could par-



tially explain why the two states have high incidence rates but lower-than-average rates of breast cancer deaths.

Unfortunately, some clues fall in the "blame the victim" category. OR and WA residents consume slightly higher amounts of alcohol per person than the national average. The American Cancer Society reports that women who drink more than one alcoholic beverage per day have about a 20%

(Continued on page 2)

Looking ahead: 2009 environment and health legislation in Oregon

- The **Children's Safe Products Act** would ban known toxic chemicals, including phthalates and bisphenol A, in children's products. Contact Oregon Environmental Coalition.
- **Healthy Schools Act of 2009** would require green cleaning products and Integrated Pest Management techniques and replace diesel school buses. Contact Oregon Toxics Alliance.
- The **Oregon Birth Anomalies Registry** would aid research on birth defects that may have environmental causes. About 24% of infant deaths per year in Oregon are caused by birth anomalies. Contact Oregon March of Dimes.
- **Access to Clinical Trials Act** would require insurers to pay for routine care related to participating in a clinical trial. Contact Susan G. Komen in Oregon.

Phthalates Ban in Force Feb. 2009

Effective Feb. 10, 2009, a new federal law will ban six toxic phthalates from children's products.

The ban will protect children from these plastic-softening chemicals that are linked to breast cancer, lower sperm counts, and birth defects.

The law shows the power of parents, scientists, and advocates who lobby against unsafe chemicals in consumer products. Retailers

and manufacturers Walmart, Toys-R-Us, Lego, Evenflo, and Gerber promised to phase out phthalates. California, Washington, and Vermont have already restricted phthalates in children's products.

BUT. . . In November 2008, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said that toys manufactured before February 10 may be sold. This ruling ignores the law and puts children at risk.

(Continued from page 1)
OR, WA breast cancer rates

greater risk of breast cancer than women who don't drink.

Another proven risk factor is hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Before research showed higher breast cancer rates in HRT takers, it was commonly used by urban women in OR and WA.

Pacific Northwest women give birth at later-than-average ages. Having children "late," or not at all, and not breastfeeding increase the risk of breast cancer.

Cancer prevention activists point to 16 pesticides linked to breast cancer. Pesticides are commonly used in nurseries, Christmas tree

farms, cranberry bogs, and home gardens. Two of the top five chemicals applied in Oregon in 2007 – the fumigants metam-sodium and 1,3-dichloropropene – are classified as known carcinogens in California's pesticide reporting system.

Current research shows that higher levels of vitamin D in a woman's blood reduce her risk of breast cancer. It's interesting to note that the 15 states with the highest breast cancer incidence are all northern states that get less vitamin-D-producing sunlight.

See all states ranked.

[http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/uscs/
/Table.aspx?Group=4fb&Year
=2004&Display=n](http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/uscs/Table.aspx?Group=4fb&Year=2004&Display=n)

Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition is a non-profit 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
Melissa Brue; Nancy Crumpacker, MD; Phil Goldsmith; Karen Gritzka, RN; Rita McDonagh, PT, LMT; Beth Schwartz; Caroline Skinner; Joanne Skirving

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We appreciate your donations. Thank you!

- **In memory of Harriette Hammer** from Susan Hammer
- **In honor of Diane Lund-Muzikant** from Nancy Crumpacker
- **In honor of Joanne Skirving** from Sherry Archer

Rachel's Friends welcomes three new board members

- Melissa Brue
- Beth Schwartz
- Caroline Skinner

Beth, Caroline, and Melissa all have advocacy experience and longtime commitments to environmental health.

Hormone-Disrupting Chemicals in Teen Girls

A recent study by the Environmental Working Group reports that U.S. teenage girls are absorbing hormone-disrupting chemicals found in cosmetics and body care products.

www.ewg.org/reports/teens

The study found 16 toxic chemicals in 20 girls aged 14-19 from eight states and the District of Columbia. The chemicals included preservatives, fragrance, and anti-microbial compounds that are linked to serious health risks in lab animals, even at low-doses. The girls used an average of nearly 17 personal care products per day that contained a total of 174 ingredients.

The study provides the first data from teens on two chemicals that act like estrogen in the body: synthetic musks (common fragrances) and the preservatives parabens. Chemicals that act like estrogen can set off early puberty and increase breast cancer risk. The federal government does not require

Survey shows misperceptions about environment and breast cancer

by Diane Lund-Muzikant, Board Chair, Rachel's Friends

There's a public perception that environmental factors increase the risk of breast cancer, says Melissa L. Bondy, Ph.D., professor of epidemiology at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, who spoke at the 2008 Breast Cancer Symposium co-sponsored by the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

In an online survey, 800 women aged 30 and older identified the following risk factors: air pollution (32% of respondents), artificial additives (25%), pesticides in homes and gardens (23%), artificial sweeteners (22%), and microwaving plastic (19%). *Prevention* Magazine published results in October 2008.

It's unknown if low levels of environmental chemicals that act like hormones or disrupt hormone pathways increase the risk of breast cancer, said Bondy, who encouraged people to follow the precautionary principle.

companies to test products before they are sold.

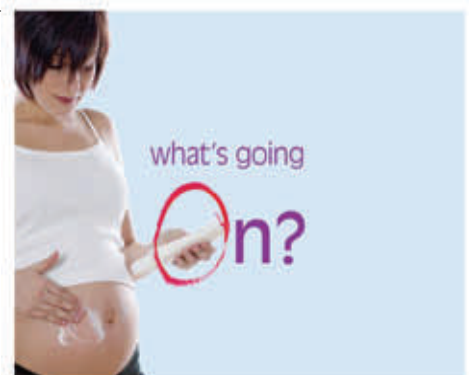
"Hormone-altering chemicals shouldn't be in cosmetics . . . used by teenage girls," said Rebecca Sutton, Ph.D, report author. "Their bodies are developing and may be especially vulnerable to risks from exposures."

"We need to know more," she said, pointing out that BPDEs, Bisphenol A, phthalates, heavy metals, and pesticides are potential risk factors.

"I'm not certain when we'll have more information about the cumulative effect of chemical exposures," she said, in response to a question from Barbara Brenner, executive director of Breast Cancer Action.

In 2008, more than 180,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer; an estimated 40,000 died from the disease (American Cancer Society). Meanwhile, 69% of women are unaware that regular exercise protects against the disease, and 61% do not understand that being overweight raises their risk.

"Globally," Bondy said, "[cancer] occurrence rates are increasing, which could be caused by lifestyle and environmental changes."



Body lotion should be safe. Not toxic.

Rachel's Friends
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Sunday, Jan. 11, 3-5 p.m. on KBOO radio, Portland 90.7 FM, Corvallis 100.7 FM, Columbia Gorge 91.9 FM. **Interview with Lauren Moret** on depleted uranium's (DU) health hazards and genetic disruption to the children of anyone who inhaled or touched DU-coated weapons in the Kosovo, Gulf, Iraq, and/or Afghanistan wars. DU particles pass easily from an infected person.

Wednesday, Jan. 28
5:30 - 7:30 pm, University of Oregon in Portland, 70 NW Couch. **Public health and air pollution.** Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Fri. and Sat., February 6, 7
First Annual NW Environmental Health Conference: Bridging Research, Care, & Policy. Oregon Health & Science University, Portland
www.oeonline.org/our-work/kidshealth/healthprofessionals/the-1st-annual-nw-environmental-health-forum

Saturday, February 28
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Issues Conference
8 a.m.-4 p.m. Oregon Convention Center, Portland.
Keynote speaker: Kerri Winters-Stone, PhD. How physical activity impacts survival.

Register online or by mail.
Deadline: Feb. 20. \$40 advance, \$45 day of conference (if tickets are left).
www.komenoregon.org/events/issues_after_breast_cancer.shtml

Tuesday, March 3
2009 Oregon environmental legislation forum,
Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital, Office Bldg. Auditorium, 1040 NW 22nd Ave., first floor, 7:30 p.m. **FREE.**
Speakers: Lisa Arkin, OR Toxics Alliance; Rene Hackenmiller-Paradis, OR Env. Coalition; Joanne Rogovoy, March of Dimes