

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS



Pollutants

Parabens

Parabens are chemical preservatives that prevent growth of bacteria and mold, and increase the shelf life of many perishable products. It is estimated that parabens are present in 75 to 90% of skin products.

Phthalates

Phthalates are used in the manufacture of plastics. Soft plastics in particular, release phthalates into the contents of the plastic container.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)

Also known as volatile solvents, VOCs are air borne particles that contribute to poor air quality and smog.

The word pollution conjures up images of oil spills and smokestacks spewing toxic chemicals into the air. These are extreme and serious forms of pollution, but we are exposed to more subtle sources of pollution every day. These pollutants generally don't have the immediate and dramatic toxic effects of oil and toxic chemical spills, but they can have long-term health consequences.

Symptoms related to environmental pollutants

A single large exposure to a known environmental toxin can have immediate health effects, and might even be considered a medical emergency. However, long-term exposure to low levels of environmental pollutants produces more vague symptoms, for which it is often difficult to determine the cause. Symptoms associated with environmental pollution include:

- irritation of eyes, nose and throat; skin rashes and other skin irritations
- effects on the central nervous system including impaired thinking and movement
- disrupting the function of hormones
- headaches, nausea, anxiety, or depression
- fatigue and drowsiness

Where are environmental pollutants found?

Parabens are found in skin products and foods

Shampoos, conditioners, soaps, hand sanitizers, lip balms, facial masks and foundations frequently contain parabens as do pharmaceutical products like antacids, suppositories, injectable drugs, and mentholated rubs. Food products containing parabens may include fish and poultry, mayonnaise, oils, ketchup, pickles, dairy products and most processed foods.

Phthalates are found in plastics

Vinyl flooring and tile, wall coverings, pool liners, wires & cables, garden hoses, weather stripping, flexible plastic medical tubing and bags, some food containers, bottled water containers, children's toys, shower curtains, and faux leather all contain phthalates.

Volatile organic compounds are found in a variety of household products

- **Xylene** is found in varnish/polish, paint, paint thinner, paint remover, shellac, rust inhibitors, lacquers, inks, dyes, adhesives, cleaning fluids and products, degreasing agents, tobacco smoke, fuel additive.
- **Toluene** is found in aerosols, spray paint cans, glues, varnishes, shellac, tobacco smoke, fuel additive, solvent-based sanitizers, and may be added to some cosmetics.
- **Benzene** is found in adhesives, paint removers/strippers, carburetor cleaner, rubber cement, some arts & crafts supplies, and tobacco smoke.
- **Trimethylbenzene** is found in coatings, paint thinners, wood preservatives, cleaners, aerosols, drycleaning degreasers, fuel additives, pesticides, and printer inks.
- **Styrene** is found in packing materials (polystyrene), thermal & electrical insulation, fiberglass, foam cups and food containers, and automotive emissions.

Why test for environmental pollutants?

- Environmental pollutants are found everywhere.
- The toxic effects of environmental pollutants are associated with many common health concerns.
- An environmental pollutants panel helps determine the pollutants you have the most exposure to - information you can use to minimize future exposure.

Why Test?

Good health has a lot to do with maintaining balance: the right balance of work and play, the right balance of nutrients in the diet, and the right kinds of foods.

Toxic element exposure may be a contributing factor to a variety of chronic illnesses. Urine element testing is useful for monitoring treatment of toxic element exposure.

Rocky Mountain Analytical is committed to offering tests that identify hormone imbalances and other conditions - so they can be corrected before disease develops!

About Rocky Mountain Analytical

Rocky Mountain Analytical is an accredited medical laboratory located in Calgary, Alberta. We opened in 2002 with saliva hormone testing, and have steadily added to our test menu ever since.

Ask your health care provider for more information about these or any other Rocky Mountain Analytical tests.

Restoring Health

As the authors of "Slow Death by Rubber Duck" revealed in their groundbreaking and entertaining book on environmental toxins, exposure to environmental pollutants can be dramatically reduced if you seek out and use chemical-free products. In other words, always read labels and don't be afraid to ask manufacturers for more information!

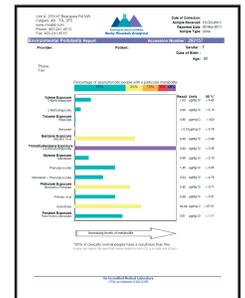
Parabens, phthalates and volatile organic compounds are eliminated from the body relatively quickly; generally within a couple of days. Thus, when exposure has been reduced or eliminated, levels of the byproducts of environmental pollutants should decline in a short period of time. If exposure is ongoing, accumulation of environmental toxins can occur. Once toxins accumulate, it takes longer to eliminate them once exposure is reduced.

A few simple tips to help reduce your elevated levels of parabens, phthalates and VOC's:

1. Steer clear of ingested, topical, and airborne phthalate and paraben sources such as plastics, paints, cosmetics and processed foods. Be a label reader and make conscious choices about what you choose to put in and on your body and bring into your home.
2. Avoid plug-in or spray air fresheners, and harsh chemical or heavily scented cleaning products. Instead use essential oils to scent a room, open a window for some fresh air and choose environmentally friendly cleaning products.
3. Make daily beneficial lifestyle choices that promote gentle detoxification in the body, such as drinking lots of water, exercising on a daily basis and eating a whole foods diet.
4. Your health care provider can recommend supplements and lifestyle changes to help your body eliminate parabens, phthalates and VOCs more efficiently.

Test Results

The test report for the EPP graphs, in bar form, the breakdown products of volatile organic compounds, phthalates and parabens in urine. The longer the bar, the more of a particular breakdown product (metabolite) that is present in the urine. A very high number for one or more metabolites does not necessarily mean the environmental pollutant is responsible for symptoms, it just means you have more of that metabolite than most other clinically normal people. Your health professional will consider your symptoms along with your test results and help you determine the best course of action.



In preparation for the Environmental Pollutants Profile, you must avoid foods preserved with benzoic or sorbic acid for a minimum of 48 hours prior to collection. The metabolites of these preservatives are the same as those of some environmental pollutants, which could artificially raise your levels. The best way to avoid benzoic and sorbic acid (or benzoate or sorbate containing foods) is to **eat only fresh, unprocessed foods for 48 hours prior to urine collection.**

Benzoic acid containing foods include beer, chewing gums, sweets, ice cream, jams, jellies, maraschino cherries, fruit juices, soft drinks, pickles, barbecue sauces, salad dressings and margarine. Benzoic acid is also found in processed foods like processed cheeses and lunch meats.

Food manufacturers add sorbic acid and potassium sorbate to a wide variety of products, including bread and other bakery foods, cheese, yogurt, dried fruits, gelatin, jelly, syrup, sauces and soft drinks. Sorbic acid and potassium sorbate also are used as wine preservatives.

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