

Chemicals in Personal Care Products Linked to Early Death

Phthalates in personal care products are associated with premature death from all causes.

October 18, 2021 By [Jeanette L. Pinnace](#)

Each day, people use hundreds of consumer [products](#) that contain a common class of chemicals called [phthalates](#). These include personal care products such as shampoo, makeup and perfume. Now [study findings published in the journal Environmental Pollution](#) show that phthalates are linked to premature death from all causes, particularly to death from heart disease, reports [Insider.com](#).

Manufacturers use phthalates to make fragrances last longer as well as to make [plastics](#) more durable. The chemicals may also be found in vinyl flooring, garden hoses, lubricating oils, wall coverings, detergents, pharmaceuticals and blood bags.

For the study, researchers at NYU Langone's Grossman School of Medicine assessed urine samples collected from over 5,303 adults between ages 55 and 64 who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2001 to 2010.

Scientists noted that individuals with the most elevated levels of phthalate metabolites—breakdown by-products—in their urine were more likely to experience premature [death](#), particularly related to [cardiovascular](#) problems.

“These [chemicals](#) have a rap sheet,” Leonardo Trasande, MD, an NYU medical school professor of pediatrics, environmental medicine and population health and the lead study author, told [CNN](#). “And the fact of the matter is that when you look at the entire body of evidence, it provides a haunting pattern of concern.”

The findings add to a hefty body of evidence that shows phthalates can disrupt hormone function. No matter how slight the interference to [hormones](#), such as those governing reproduction, physical development and [brain](#) and [immune system](#) function, these disturbances can cause major problems, according to the [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences](#).

Prior studies have definitively connected people's exposure to phthalates to [chronic illnesses](#), including [obesity](#), [diabetes](#) and [heart disease](#).

Study calculations linked the deaths of between 91,000 and 107,000 adults in the United States to phthalates at a cost to American economic productivity of between \$40 billion and \$47 billion.

“This study adds to the growing database on the impact of plastics on the human body and bolsters public health and business cases for reducing or eliminating the use of plastics,” stressed Trasande.

To learn more about the health effects of phthalates, read “[Ordinary Household Goods Linked to Depressed Thyroid in Young Girls.](#)”

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