



How Metals in Food Affect Your Child's Behavior

According to a lead researcher in the field, the contamination of food with certain metals needs to be urgently addressed in light of growing evidence linking trace

metals to behavioral problems.

It has long been known that excessive amounts of any metal could be potentially dangerous, but there is now also strong evidence that even tiny amounts of some metals can contribute to aggressive or antisocial behavior, says Neil Ward, a professor of chemistry at the UK's University of Surrey.

Lead has been linked to antisocial behavior, partly because it contributes to nutrient depletion. Aluminum has also been linked to antisocial behavior, as it competes for the binding sites of biochemical receptors of other metal ions, such as iron and zinc.

Sources:

» NutraIngredients.com March 25, 2009



Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Heavy metals are a scourge of modern living and very difficult to avoid as these toxic contaminants have become an integral part of our industrialized culture. Metals like aluminum, cadmium, lead and mercury are commonly found in thousands of different food products, household products, personal products and untold numbers of industrial products and chemicals.

The really bad news is that soon after you're exposed to them, the heavy metals are rapidly removed from blood circulation and stored in vital tissues where they disrupt your biological systems and can wreak absolute havoc on your health.

The presence of toxic metals in your body is highly significant for they are capable of causing serious health problems by interfering with your body's normal biological functioning.

The health effects range from minor physical ailments to chronic diseases, and as discussed in the article above, your mood and behavior.

How Heavy Metals Affects Behaviour

You're exposed to heavy metals in varying amounts from a staggering number of sources as you move about in your day to day life. This [earlier article](#) contains an impressive list of sources of various heavy metal contaminations, and their associated health effects. It has long been known that being exposed to excessive amounts of any metal can be dangerous, but now there is also strong evidence that even small traces of certain contaminants can lead to aggressive and anti-social behaviour.

According to Neil Ward, professor of chemistry at the UK's University of Surrey, many of the mechanisms are still unknown, but it's clear that eliminating heavy metals produces positive improvements in people with mood disorders who have high levels of contaminations in their system.

Now, some metals act as nutrients in small amounts, and are essential for good health, such as:

- Copper
- Manganese
- Zinc

Other metals, however, including arsenic, cadmium, lead and mercury, do not belong in your body. Not only can they be highly toxic on their own, but they can also hinder absorption of other essential nutrients in your body, which is particularly problematic in children since it can seriously affect their development.

Lead, for example, acts as an anti-nutrient and has been linked to delinquency and lowered IQ in children, partly because it depletes other vital nutrients such as magnesium, zinc and vitamin B1.

Several studies show a clear link between lead and an increased risk of mental disturbances and altered behaviour.

For example, one [1996 study](#) that looked at lead levels and delinquency found that lead exposure is associated with an increased risk of antisocial and delinquent behaviour, and that the effect increases with age. This was corroborated again in another [study](#) that found adjudicated delinquents were four times more likely to have elevated lead concentrations in their bones.

Another [1990 meta-analysis](#) found that even low level lead exposure impairs children's IQ, which could affect their behavior.

According to the [2005 updated guidelines from the CDC](#), children's blood lead levels should be no higher than 6 µg/dl to avoid subtle neurological symptoms. Symptoms usually become evident above 10 µg/dl, and blood lead levels of 380 ug/dL can cause convulsions, coma, and even death.

For more information about the warning signs of lead poisoning, and your most common sources of lead, please see my previous article, [How Do You Know if You Have Lead Poisoning?](#)

Unfortunately, studies have shown that [fluoridated water supplies can increase children's absorption of lead](#), and, when lead is introduced into your body in sufficient quantities it displaces zinc, which also disrupts brain cell growth. Therefore, installing a [high quality water filter](#) in your home is always a prudent idea, especially if you have children.

[Low vitamin D](#) and C intake can also adversely affect lead levels, [causing more lead to accumulate](#).

Aluminum is another highly toxic metal that has been linked not only to behavioral problems, but also to brain disorders from learning disabilities, to dementia and Alzheimer's as aluminum tends to [travel to your brain and accumulate there](#).

How Can You Protect Yourself Against Heavy Metal Overload?

If your job or living circumstances expose you to heavy metals, you'll naturally want to minimize or eliminate your exposure as much as possible. Be aware that there are many ways these toxins can be absorbed into your body--through foods and beverages, skin exposure, and via the air you breathe. So, whenever possible, wear gloves, use protective breathing apparatuses, and be sure to obtain fresh air ventilation.

However, due to the sheer number of possible sources of contamination, most preventive measures to avoid exposing yourself to them are ultimately futile. The inescapable reality is that it is nearly impossible in this day and age not to be exposed to heavy metals. It is only a matter of how much and how often.

So is there *anything* you can do to prevent accumulating heavy metals in your body, and rid yourself of them if your toxic load is already high?

Yes, there is.

Eating Right for Heavy Metal Elimination

Eating [a diet based on your nutritional type](#) that is focused on whole organic foods can not only protect you from heavy metal accumulation, but can also empower your body to cleanse and detoxify itself.

How?

Accumulation of toxins in your body is not normal. In fact, your body is designed to be healthy and function at peak performance. Every cell in your body knows exactly what to do and how to do it perfectly, whether a liver cell, a brain cell, a bone cell, etc. And along with this, detoxifying is part of the nature of every cell as well. If it wasn't, cells would die from autointoxication from their own waste--produced from their own chemical activities.

The critical factor determining whether or not heavy metals are retained in your body is the biochemical balance at the time of exposure (and during the period after accumulation). Your body is designed to detoxify, but the kicker is that cells need "the proper biochemical balance" in order to be able to detoxify naturally.

When your biochemistry is properly balanced, your cells can produce the energy needed to mobilize the heavy metals and flush them out of your body.

Without proper nutrition, however, your cells cannot function optimally and your body starts accumulating whatever you're exposed to.

When you begin to properly balance your body chemistry by addressing the needs of your individual nutritional type, the negative and health damaging process of heavy metal accumulation can be reversed in a normal, natural way. When you feed your body exactly what it needs, every cell's natural capacity to detoxify is activated, unleashed, and restored.

You can also use supplements to help you detoxify. Some that many clinicians are using are chlorella, green or red clay, Zeolite and OSR which is a glutathione precursor developed by Dr. Boyd Haley. Green or red clay likely works as well as Zeolite and is less expensive.