

For the Health of Our Future

By
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Every once in a while a story comes along that just grabs you and turns you inside out. A story so powerful that you just can't get it out of your head. This past month, I was exposed to such a story. It's a story about a 4-year old little girl, Colette Chuda, who died in 1991 from Wilm's tumor, a rare form of non-hereditary cancer.

When Colette became sick at age 4, her parents Nancy and James did what all good parents would do and fought to understand Colette's illness and try to save their daughters life. Unfortunately, the cancer won. It took 4 years after Colette's death, but in 1995 in a study published by the American Journal of Epidemiology, the Chuda's learned that maternal exposure to pesticides was most likely a cause of the disease when the tumor was diagnosed 48 months after the child's birth. Colette was diagnosed when she was 4 years old, exactly 48 months after she was born. You can read the Chuda's full story at www.healthychild.org.

The study also noted that "the effects of pesticides could be mediated by mutations in germ cells, by exposure of the fetus in utero, or by exposure after birth by residues present in breast milk, in foods, in the home, or in the surrounding environment."

After Colette's death, Nancy and James Chuda embarked on a mission, through the creation of Healthy Child Healthy World, to educate parents, teachers, childcare professionals, and everyone else interested in creating healthier environments for our children, and that's what I want to discuss today.

In conjunction with our company, Shaklee, Healthy Child Healthy World created a DVD called "Creating Healthy Environments for Children." Every teacher, every day-care center, every PTA, everyone associated with children in any way should see this video. You can purchase this video at www.healthychild.org for \$12. You can also contact me and we'll get one to you at cost plus S&H.

This DVD identifies 5 easy steps for homes, child care centers and schools to take to make their environments as safe as possible for our children. These are simple approaches that we should all be using. However, before we look at these steps, lets examine some startling statistics.

- Over 80,000 chemicals are registered for use in products we use every day, most of which did no exist 50 years ago.
- There is no pre-market safety testing required under any federal law for chemicals in cosmetics, toys, clothing, carpets, and construction materials.
- Of the 15,000 most commonly used chemicals more than 80% have not been tested for health effects on children.

- None have been tested for their health effects when they interact with one another – and that’s the way we are exposed to them.

Dr. Alan Greene, M.D., Stanford University School of Medicine tested “cord blood” of newborn infants to determine what, if anything, babies were exposed to even prior to birth and found an average of 200 industrial chemicals coursing through these newborns even before they were born. These were things from the environment that people never had to deal with in the past.

It is difficult to say what impact this is having, however we do know that the incidence of childhood diseases are on the rise.

- The incidence of cancer in children jumped 26% between 1975 and 1998
- The number of children in special education programs increased 191% from 1977 to 1994
- Childhood asthma rates increased 100% between 1980 and 1995

While these numbers might reflect a true increase in incidence, improved detection or reporting, they still suggest a problem of epidemic proportion. Toxic exposure deserves special attention because it is preventable.

Dr. Phil Landrigan of New York’s Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, and Director, Center for Children’s Health and the Environment, notes that pound for pound children consume more food and water and are more highly exposed to toxins than adults. The fact that children live lower, they play on the floor, put their fingers in their mouths, exposes them to more chemicals. He further states that we need to have more effective processes to get toxic chemicals off the market and replace them with safer alternatives.

With that as a background, let’s look at what we can do.

The Five Easy Steps:

Step 1: Avoid using pesticides. There are safer and equally effective products available. Do some on-line research or ask for organic options at your local hardware store. Pesticides are linked to Asthma, Cancer, Behavior problems, Learning disabilities and Reproductive disorders.

Step 2: Clean safely. The chemicals in conventional cleaning products can cause a wide range of health problems including respiratory irritation, chemical burns, and increased risk of cancer. Most childhood poisonings are the result of common household cleaners. Eliminate clutter, keep dirt out and use safer cleaning products that are safe, non-toxic, and hypoallergenic and contain no VOC’s (Volatile Organic Compounds). Shaklee’s **GETCLEAN™** product line is perfect. Visit <http://www.shaklee.net/jumpeter/getclean/index> for more info.

Step 3: Help Children Breathe Easier. Children and adults spend 90% of their time indoors, and on a typical cleaning day, the levels of chemicals toxins in the air can be hundreds of times higher than the outdoor air in the most polluted city. The US EPA states, "Indoor air pollution is one of the top four health risks facing the nation." Using the least toxic chemicals, opening windows for 5 minutes a day, growing non-toxic plants, and using a vacuum with a HEPA filter and changing the bag often all help. Also, a high-quality air purifier like the AirSource 3000® (www.shaklee.net/jumpeter/product/55102) will help keep impurities from the air in your home.

Step 4: Provide Healthy Food. You all know the importance of a balanced diet and it's even more critical for our children. Provide organically grown foods as much as possible. Look for low fat dairy and meat products and make your meals from scratch as much as possible. Most prepared foods have numerous chemicals added as colorings, flavorings and preservatives. During the growing years, this is even more critical. Finally, to ensure that all nutritional requirements are met daily, give your children a premium quality food supplement daily. Visit www.shaklee.net/jumpeter/product/20007 for one such product.

Step 5: Use plastic products wisely. Chemicals in plastics have been linked to cancers, birth defects, poor nervous development and hormone disruption. These elements can leak out of damaged plastic containers during food storage or preparation, especially in the microwave. Minimize plastic exposure to hot, oily or fatty foods, or look for bio-based forms of plastic manufactured from things like corn. If you must use plastic, look for ones numbered 1, 2, 4, or 5. You can find these markings in the triangular recyclable symbol.

Each one of us has the power to change things. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. The steps are simple and the results will protect our children, our most valuable resource. Following these simple steps will certainly provide for the health of our future.

Yours in Good Health,

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