

July 4, 2005

Heart to Heart

With Philip S. Chua, M.D.

Carcinogens in Our Home

Most cancers, in general, are caused by the body's repeated exposure to harmful chemicals in our environment. These include tobacco, alcohol, and all dangerous ingredients in common household cleansing agents, like laundry, kitchen, walls, windows, floor, and toilet detergents. Added to these are the variety of chemicals, solutions or sprays we have in the garage, for cleaning cars and the floor underneath them. And the pollution of our rivers and lakes and oceans from industrial toxic wastes, and air pollution from these same companies and from our car exhaust system, destroy the protective ozone layer above us and are major sources of carcinogens. To boot, many of us regularly ingest with gusto two major cancer-producing substances: tobacco and alcohol, two culprit-agents that account for most of the diseases, disabilities and deaths in the world today. The diseases include cancer, lung illnesses, diabetes, hypertension, heart attack and stroke. Many forms of cancer are literally "self-inflicted" and otherwise preventable.

Whether we realize it or not, our bad habits and our closets and shelves at home, are the two of the most substantial sources of cancer-causing chemicals that we come in contact with, or inhale the fumes of, daily, which adversely impact our body, health, and longevity. The other carcinogens are from the environmental poisons forced upon us by irresponsible industrial corporations and pollutant-emitting vehicles.

Statistics show that most of the illnesses that affect, maim and kill human beings today are brought on by these substances: alcohol and/or tobacco (including secondhand smoke). These disease include lung diseases (bronchitis, emphysema, lung cancer), cardiovascular diseases (high blood pressure, heart attack, cardiomyopathy, rhythm problems and sudden death), metabolic diseases, like diabetes mellitus, and, many forms of cancer. The other factors are likewise due to similar bad choices on our part: a high-cholesterol, high-fat, high-carbohydrate, high salt, low-fiber diet; and, dangerously living a sedentary life (as a couch potato, doing only finger exercises with the TV remote, and munching on all the junk foods around), simply getting fat. This scenario reminds us of the strategy to get the most weight on cattle and hogs, before an early slaughter: keeping them in a tight "cage" where they practically cannot move, and feeding them frequently to maximize their weight and fat. And it works. Much like our couches at home.

Living a healthy lifestyle will eliminate most of these diseases and provide us a healthier, happier, and more productive life. And this singular wonderful benefit in itself is worth all the sacrifices and hard work one needs to invest to achieve it.

On the household front, we agree that these chemical agents make it a lot easier for us to do our chores at home, but the potential side-effects and complications from their use – possible diseases, disabilities and early deaths -- are too high a price to pay. And for these dozen or more chemical agents we use at home daily, perhaps we can minimize the danger of toxicity by limiting their use. And maybe we can utilize more the old-fashioned non-chemical scrubbing and cleaning methods used by our great grandparents and theirs for centuries. This will certainly appear to be one retrogressive step, but, ultimately, I am sure, it will be evident that this is a great leap forward that will actually spell progress.

Please use this **Quotation with this article:**

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