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Five Reasons To Stop Using Antibacterial Soap

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Introduction

On December 16th of 2013 the FDA announced that soap manufacturers must show that antibacterial soap is both safe and more effective than using conventional soap and water or it will need to stop production of them[1].

About 75 percent of liquid antibacterial soaps and 30 percent of soap bars used has Triclosan[2] as an active ingredient. Triclosan, which was originally used strictly in hospital settings, was adopted by manufacturers of soaps and other home products during the 1990s, eventually becoming a billion dollar industry. Now Triclosan is also being used in wipes, hand gels, cutting boards, mattress pads and other home items. Triclosan's use in home over-the-counter products was never fully evaluated by the FDA however, and while the agency had to produce guidelines for the use of Triclosan in home products in 1972 ***it only published its final draft on December 16 of 2013.*** Their report, the product of decades of research, notes that the costs of antibacterial soaps outweigh the benefits and forces the manufacturers to prove otherwise.

You probably shouldn't wait that long to stop using antibacterial soaps and here are five reasons why.

1. Antibacterial soaps are no more effective than conventional soap and water.

Forty-two years of FDA research in addition to independent studies have produced no evidence that Triclosan provides any health benefits as compared to old-fashioned soap. So far, analysis of the health benefits do not show any evidence that Triclosan can reduce the transmission of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections. This might be due to the fact that antibacterial soaps specifically target bacteria, but not the viruses that cause the majority of seasonal colds and flus.

2. Antibacterial soaps have the potential to create chemically resistant bacteria.

The FDA is making manufacturers prove these products work because of possible health risks associated with Triclosan and bacterial resistance is first on the list. Heavy use of antibiotics can cause bacterial

QUESTION:
Other than soap what other household items may contain antibacterial chemicals?
A) mattress pads
B) hand wipes
C) cutting boards
D) none of the above

ANSWER:
A), B) and C)

TRUE OR FALSE:
Antibacterial soaps kill both viruses and bacteria

ANSWER:
False – they do not kill viruses

Finish this sentence...
Antibacterial soaps may...

A) interfere with thyroid production
B) eventually cause bacteria resistance
C) kill bacteria necessary for our immune system
D) all of the above

ANSWER:
D) all of the above

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resistance, which results in a random mutation that allows the bacteria to survive exposure to the chemical. If the chemical is used frequently enough, it might kill other bacteria but the resistant bacteria will grow even in the presence of this chemical. Antibacterial resistance is a huge medical issue. Some bacterial species have even acquired resis-tance to several different antibiotic drugs, making it harder to control and treat infections as they spread.[3]

3. The soaps could impact your thyroid health

Some studies have identified that rats, frogs and other animals can't regulate their production of thyroid hormone when exposed to Triclosan and the theory is that because it chemically resembles thyroid hormones that it can bind to the thyroid receptor sites shutting down thyroid hormone production.[4]

4. The soaps might lead to other health problems, too

Children with prolonged exposure to Triclosan appear to have a higher chance of developing allergies, including peanut allergies and hay fever. This could be due to reduced exposure to bacteria, which are necessary for immune system function and development. Another study suggests that Triclosan may interfere with muscle contractions in human cells, as well as in mice and minnows. Given new findings that the chemical can penetrate the skin and enter the bloodstream more easily than originally thought this is a huge concern.[5]

5. Antibacterial soaps are bad for the environment.

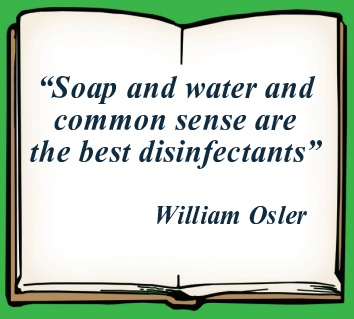
When we use a lot of Triclosan in soap it gets flushed down the drain; it leaves sewage plants and is often detected in streams and other bodies of water where it disrupts algae's ability to perform photosynthesis. Triclosan builds up in fatty tissues and it may appear at greater levels in the fatty tissues of animals higher up the food chain.

What Should You Do?

If you want to stop using antibac-terial hand soap, you can substitute hand sanitizers, which simply kill both bacteria and viruses with alcohol. Because the effectiveness of hand-washing depends on how long you wash, a quick squirt of sanitizer might be more effective when time is limited.

The CDC recommends washing your hands with conventional soap and water. That's because while alcohol from hand sanitizer kills bacteria, it does not remove dirt or anything else you may have touched. The water doesn't need to be hot and you are better off scrub-bing for about 30 seconds to get properly clean.

Quote to Inspire



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