

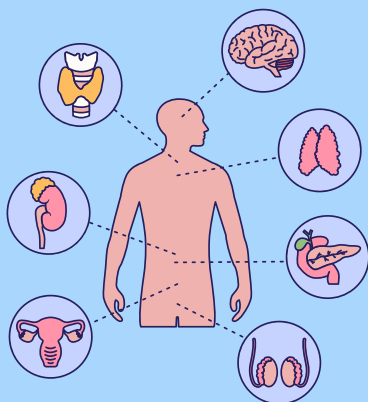


The ABCs of EDCs

Everything you need to know about endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and how they can impact the body.

EDCs:

EDCs are natural or human-made substances that interfere with the healthy functioning of the body's endocrine system.



The Endocrine System:

The endocrine system is made up of glands throughout the body. These glands create hormones. Hormones act like messengers, traveling throughout the body to deliver instructions that control biological processes ranging from growth and development to sleep, digestion, and childbirth.



Hormones:

The human body relies on more than 50 hormones to function. You may know estrogen and testosterone, which help to control sexual development, as well as the “feel good” hormones serotonin, endorphins, and oxytocin, which regulate mood along with many other essential processes.



The Impact Of EDCs:

EDCs can alter how the body's endocrine system receives and responds to feedback. Some EDCs are chemically similar to our hormones and mimic their effects in the body. Others block hormonal actions, increase or decrease their levels, or affect how the body reacts. All of these changes have the potential to impair the healthy functioning of the endocrine system and the many processes it controls.

Why It Matters:

The endocrine system is extremely sensitive, especially during pregnancy and development. Some EDCs can be hazardous in tiny amounts, such as one part per trillion – the equivalent of one drop of water in 20 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Risk:

Some of these substances, such as lead, are so harmful that there is no level of exposure that is considered safe. There are approximately 100,000 synthetic chemicals on the global market, and only a small percentage have been assessed for their effects on the human health.



Common EDC Examples:

- Bisphenols
- Phthalates
- Parabens
- PFAS
- Plastic Chemicals
- Pesticides
- Dioxins
- Lead