

Chemicals and Male Reproduction

- The commonly used pesticide 2,4-D often ends up in the semen of men who spray it, says a Health Canada study. About half of 97 male Ontario farmers studied had detectable levels of 2,4-D, which has been around for 40 years and is routinely used on lawns and golf courses. Researchers are concerned pesticide from semen could transfer to the fetus. Another study of farmers in Argentina found that their 2,4-D levels were up to 300 times higher than those of the Ontario men. The Argentinian farmers also had damaged sperm cells. Other studies found sperm damage was caused by dioxins that accidentally crept into 2,4-D pesticides, but the industry claims no dioxins are present in today's weedkillers. (CBC)
- Smoking harms male fertility, according to a study released at the 18th annual meeting of the European Society for Human Reproduction and Embryology in Vienna this July. In couples undergoing fertility therapy, women whose partners smoked were less likely to become pregnant and more likely to have their fertility treatments completely fail. Tobacco contains carcinogens such as benzopyrene and cotinine that can damage sperm structure and genetic material. If one partner smokes, the couple is 30 per cent less likely to get pregnant; if both smoke, that figure rises to 50 per cent. (HealthWorld Online)
- Studies have shown that estrogen-like chemicals called xenoestrogens can disrupt the male reproductive system and reduce sperm production. For the first time, a study shows

these chemicals affect sperm itself. Researchers at the same European human reproduction conference in Vienna say these pseudo-estrogens—found in foods and industrial products—can speed sperm burnout and prevent their ability to fertilize. (HealthWorld Online)

- Air quality affects sperm quality, report researchers who reviewed more than 14,000 sperm samples from Los Angeles and Northern California. More ozone

(smog) means reduced sperm count as well as sperm motility, or ability to swim, according to findings this April at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine. Inhaled ozone may trigger an inflammatory reaction, which in turn harms sperm. (Reuters, April 19, 2002) ■

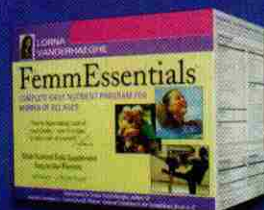
For more on how chemicals affect male reproductive health, see "Xenoestrogen Pollution" by Stephanie Trenciansky, ND, on page 30.

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