

*Scientific Study***Scientists Question Household Product Safety**

**“A household product may still prove unsafe to use even after it has gone through vigorous testing.”**

Though most household cleaning and chemical products considered safe to use, scientists have now discovered this may not be the case.

The widespread belief that people develop health problems from common household products only when they are more susceptible or have pre-existing health conditions may be erroneous.

“Even healthy individuals are susceptible to adverse outcomes after a brief exposure,” say researchers Imran Khalid and colleagues.

Khalid studied a 43-year-old Caucasian American man, previously in good health, who developed significant long term effects after a single exposure to a household product.

Most of us don’t realize what is in household products because they do not list the ingredients on the label. Even when precautions are offered, they are often in small print and largely ignored by people who feel they are strong and healthy.

It turns out that the product this man used contained “n-butyl acetate (<5%), propane (10%), isobutane (<5%), C8-C9 petroleum hydrocarbon solvent (80%), a fluoropolymer resin, and a solvent.”

Shortly after using the product, the man became short of breath and developed a cough. He was soon so deprived of oxygen that he was hospitalized and diagnosed with chemical pneumonitis, a severe inflammation of lung tissue as a direct result of chemical exposure,

After recovery and discharge, the man continued to experience cough and shortness of breath from strong odors, fumes, cold air and exertion much like that which people with multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS) report.

The mans reactions to chemicals were documented by a methacholine inhalation test he was diagnosed with reactive airway dysfunction (RAD). MCS and RAD are increasingly becoming widespread in the population, with roughly 15% reporting these types of symptoms and 2 – 5% being disabled by them.

Most household products are not vigorously tested for safety before they are marketed. Healthy, strong people can become ill from low dose exposures to typical household products, even those which have been tested for safety.

“A household product may still prove unsafe to use even after it has gone through vigorous testing and approval processes,” says Khalid. “Extra precautions should be taken when using any chemical product at home.”

**Reference**

Khalid, I, Godfrey, AM, & Quellette, DR. Chemical pneumonitis and subsequent reactive airways dysfunction syndrome after a single exposure to a household product: a case report. *Journal of Medical Case Reports*. 2009. 3:112. doi:10.1186/1752-1947-3-112.

