

Personal Health newsletter

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR A HEALTHFUL LIFESTYLE

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Helping
you make
your own
decisions
about your
personal
health . . .



Smart Meters: Better safe than sorry

The World Health Organization has reclassified radiofrequency electromagnetic fields (EMF's) as a Class 2B carcinogen risk, possibly carcinogenic to humans. They claim high levels of exposure to electric and magnetic fields in frequencies of up to 100 kilohertz can affect the nervous system, resulting in acute health effects.

The frequencies emitted from Smart Meters (approximately 60 kilohertz say some sources) coupled with several other items we use daily (cell phones, cordless phones, computers, etc.) put many of us at higher than the 'safe' exposure limit to EMF's. We should be concerned with the total daily exposure we get from all these 'low level' devices. And the Smart Meter program is a massive one. Each residence will be surrounded with several of them.

We can be truly grateful that wireless technology has allowed many life-saving advancements, particularly in the medical field. However, perhaps we've reached our health limit with its safety. We can't ignore the possible existence of electromagnetic hypersensitivity – or those who are getting sick from electronic devices and the 'energy' they emit. Dr. Stephen Genuis, University of Alberta's Department of Medicine, wrote a paper in 2008: *The Public Health Impact of Electromagnetic Radiation*. It expressed his concern that doctors won't recognize EMF illness and may mistreat it.

The jury is still out about wireless technology: Is it to blame for the increase of cancer in children? Do cell phones cause throat and brain cancer? With the increasingly high rates of diseases like cancer, are we absolutely certain wireless technology isn't partly to blame? Until there is proof either way, at least we had the choice to avoid EMF pollution in our homes, that is, until we were forced to accept Smart Meters.

We can follow certain practices in our own homes to minimize our EMF exposure. We don't have to own a cell phone or we can choose to turn it off. We can use corded (not cordless) phones, a hardwired (not wireless) computer, use battery operated devices wherever we can, and leave most electronic appliances unplugged from the wall when not in use. And there are several other practices we can do to lower EMF's in our homes.

Is that being fanatical? Perhaps. But it's really not fanaticism as long as we don't excessively preach, worry, or lose sleep over it. Some of us are simply doing what we can to maintain good health; it's choosing to be cautious. However, the installation

of Smart Meters denies us the *choice* to be cautious. Smart Meter installation is going ahead anyway, whether we like it or not.

In the past we thought many of our discoveries and inventions were harmless: asbestos, uranium, Thalidomide, lead in gasoline, lead in paint and other products, hydrogenated oils in our foods, tanning beds, most plastic products (grocery bags and bottles) and the chemicals in them – like Bisphenol A (BPA) used in most plastics and the lining of cans. We also once thought CFC's (chlorofluorocarbons) and DDT (dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane) were harmless.

The director of the European Environment Agency, Jacqueline McGlade, wrote in 2009, "We have noted from previous health hazard histories such as that of lead in petrol and methyl mercury, that 'early warning' scientists frequently suffer from discrimination, from loss of research funds, and from unduly personal attacks on their scientific integrity. It would be surprising if this is not already a feature of the present EMF controversy . . ."

It was a shocking surprise when we learned, for instance, how dangerous asbestos is. That Accutane prescribed for teenage acne caused several disorders. Or that leaded gasoline contributed hugely to environmental pollution. We now realize the main chemical in the herbicide *Roundup* (glyphosate) is linked to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Ten or twenty years from now, will we get a shocking surprise about wireless technology?

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine (a group of highly credible doctors and scientists) warn more research is needed before Smart Meters are installed. And there are many other health professionals who caution about EMF's and the massive exposure we'll be getting from Smart Meters (*see back page Sources*).

It's an impressive list of those opposed. Yet there are equally credible health professionals claiming Smart Meters are safe. So which side is right and which is wrong? Are the advocates of one side more educated than the other? Is unethical politics or financial gain to blame? Or is one side a bunch of liars who won't give up their medical degrees in a poker game?

Obviously there's a standoff. Which clearly shows doubt exists. Let's not risk our good health. The Smart Meter program should be detained, perhaps indefinitely – or at the *very least*, allow us the right to choose.

It's better to be safe than sorry. 吳興

Stretch@yourcomputer.now


Do you spend lots of time at a desk or computer? By paying attention to your posture and taking frequent stretching breaks, you may be able to avoid some of the causes of upper back and neck tension.

Your head weighs approximately 12 pounds. If it's held in a forward position — away from its centre base above the shoulders — the pressure on the cervical (neck) vertebrae is increased three times. This means 36 pounds of pressure is being exerted on that tiny column of bones in your neck. The muscles in this area are working hard to stabilize and support the head, and you can be sure they're putting in overtime if you're slouching while plugging away at that keyboard.

The computer screen should be distanced a minimum of 18 inches away. Position it at about eye level, so that you don't have to raise and lower your head to look at the keyboard or screen.

Your chair should have a seat back that offers support to the lower back, which will also keep you more conscious of your posture. Feet should remain flat on the floor or slightly elevated on a footrest. Position the keyboard at approximately waist height. Adjust your chair height or alter the keyboard height with an adjusting tray. The pointer, or mouse, should be close to and at the same height as the keyboard.

Take a break as often as you can to stretch your tense muscles. Do a few stretches at your desk (see illustrations below) or get up and stroll around the office.


Rest your eyes every 30 minutes. Studies show we blink less often while staring at a computer screen. This, combined with the glare from the monitor, can cause eye strain, headaches, or vision changes. 

HEALTH

Spinach really can boost muscles

The *Journal of Nutrition* reports Popeye's craving for spinach may have been a good thing. Nitrates naturally found in foods like spinach, beet root, chard, and lettuce were substantially effective in increasing muscle strength in tests with mice.

After one week, mice given nitrate had much stronger muscles, particularly in the legs and feet, than mice in a control group. Those getting the nitrate-rich diet also developed higher levels of proteins involved in the body's calcium balance, necessary for muscle contraction. The mice were given an amount of nitrate equal to about 10 ounces of spinach for a human.

Researchers were impressed that the development of stronger muscles could be achieved with doses obtainable from a normal diet, especially one including more vegetables. 



To stretch the chest and shoulders, clasp hands behind you and try to raise hands upward. Keep a straight back. Squeeze the shoulder blades together. Hold 10-30 seconds. Repeat 1-2 times.

Bring one arm across the chest. Push against the elbow for a gentle stretch in the middle back. Hold 10-30 seconds. Repeat a few times. Then repeat with the other arm.




Sit with straight back. Tilt your head to either shoulder, then let your head fall forward, bringing chin toward chest. Hold each stretch 10-30 seconds. Repeat each of the three movements 1-2 times to relieve neck tension.

Lower back stretch: Keep your back as straight as possible. Lean forward in your chair as far as comfort allows. Touch hands to floor, if possible. Hold and relax for 10-30 seconds. Repeat once or twice.



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Pamper your feet for good health

The foot's 26 bones, its muscles, ligaments, and tendons, take quite a daily pounding. We take more than 8,000 steps daily — over four miles. Each step impacts 50% more bodyweight on our feet. And if you run or jump, the load triples.

In addition, obesity, diabetes, and other health disorders can cause foot problems. Chronic pain, or leg, back, and knee problems often result and health worsens.

Learn to recognize common foot problems and how to treat them;

● **Corns and Calluses** are thickened skin growths resulting from excessive pressure and chafing. They can become a problem if they're too thick, inflamed or painful. Calluses can cover a large area. Corns are smaller with a firm, central core. Don't trim a corn or callus if you have diabetes or circulation problems. You'll risk infection. Soak your feet daily. Using a pumice soap stone, work at gradual removal of the thick skin over a period of days.

● **Blisters** occur from friction between foot and footwear. Cover with a moleskin pad (cut a hole in its centre) to relieve pressure. If it breaks, wash with soap and water and protect with a bandage. It's not advisable, but if a large blister is a discomfort, puncture it. Cleanse with soap and water, then pierce the blister's edge with a sterile needle (soak it in rubbing alcohol). Squeeze out the liquid. Cover with a sterile bandage.

Prevent blisters by wearing properly-fitted shoes. Apply petroleum jelly to blister-prone areas or wear two pairs of socks inside athletic shoes to reduce friction.


● **Plantar Warts** are small, white, hard growths under the foot. If they're not a bother, leave them. They usually disappear in a year or two. Caused by a virus, plantar warts can spread if improperly removed. Ask your doctor for advice on removal, especially if the wart is painful or causes discomfort. Home remedies may help; Tea Tree oil or ointment is an effective herbal antiseptic, fungicide and germicide. Applied directly to the wart, it may kill the virus.

● **Athletes Foot**, caused by a fungus, is spread via shed fragments of affected skin. Red, peeling, and itching skin (particularly between the toes) are infection signs. The fungus thrives in warm, moist, enclosed areas — like damp socks, or poorly ventilated footwear. Keep feet clean and dry, shoes too. On feet and in shoes, sprinkle products containing cornstarch, talc, borax and iodine, or boric acid (to absorb moisture and odour). You can also apply Tea Tree oil or ointment to the sores nightly before retiring.

● **Bunions** are bone disfigurements on the outer side of the large toe. Heredity (faulty foot structure) and/or poorly fitting shoes cause bunions. Constant pressure results in the bony outgrowth. High-heeled and narrow-toed shoes are often to blame, making women more prone.

Removal is the only cure, but early detection is the best prevention. If you suspect a bunion developing, wear shoes with low heels and ample toe room. Soak and massage feet often.

● **Foot Odour.** Soaking in water mixed with vinegar or baking soda makes feet more acidic, minimizing foot odour. To absorb odour, use products containing cornstarch, talc, borax and iodine, or boric acid. There are several deodorant products made specifically for the feet, available in pharmacies or health food stores. When you're not wearing your shoes, sprinkle powders inside. Avoid synthetics; wear natural fibre socks or shoes.

Pamper your feet. They're all you've got holding you up. 

Giving back

“Some people willingly pay the price for organic foods, seeing this as a charity donation — a way to support the health of the planet or the farmers who are trying to do right by the land and their communities. In some spiritual communities, it is even seen as “tithing” — which means taking a portion of one's income and giving it back to the world in a way that supports the greater good.” *Jane Goodall*

Rx Laughter

Insanity is hereditary; you get it from your children. *Sam Levenson*

I'm not a vegetarian because I love animals;
I'm a vegetarian because I hate plants.
A. Whitney Brown

Procrastinate *now* — don't put it off!
Ellen DeGeneres



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Sources concerned about Smart Meters



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Jennifer Armstrong, MD, Past President, Canadian Society of Environmental Medicine, Founder, Ottawa Environmental Health Clinic, Ontario, Canada.

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