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Teflon

As I stood at the sink scrubbing and scrubbing food from my stainless-steel baking pans I thought, “That is it! I’m going to the store and I am going to buy some non-stick baking pans!” It then occurred to me that I vaguely remember something about Teflon and safety issues, so I decided to do a little research.

Cancer.org explains that Teflon is a brand name for a man-made chemical known as Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE). It has been used commercially since the 1940s. Until 2016, Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA), also known as C-8, was another man-made chemical and had been used in the making of Teflon and other similar chemicals. It was burned off in the manufacturing process (which was found to be harmful to manufacturing plant employees) but was not considered present in significant amounts in the final product. Other products that were made with PFOA included stain-resistant carpet, water-repellant clothes, paper and cardboard packaging, ski wax, and foams used to fight fires.

When PFOA was heated to more than 680 degrees it would begin to break down. Toxic gasses were then released, and it was not safe for commercial use. The company Dupont and other U.S. companies using PFOA argued that toxic gasses were only released when superheated and people would never use Teflon under that amount of heat.

“Studies done on the effect of PFOA in lab animals and by gathering data on large groups of people showed that high levels of exposure may cause various types of cancer, disease, immune system problems and issues to fetuses.” (webmd.com) Cancer.org stated that The IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) classified PFOA as “possibly carcinogenic to humans.” The wellnessmama.com website comments that after an ongoing class action lawsuit against Dupont (the makers of Teflon), The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) helped launch and received study results showing PFOA to “likely cause cancer in humans and animals.” In 2016 the EPA issued a lifetime health advisory for PFOA after multiple studies showed it could harm humans.

Webmd.com states that Major U.S. manufactures no longer use PFOA. According to Webmd.com they now use other PFC’s (Perfluorinated chemicals). PFC’s are tough chemicals that are waterproof and stain resistant. They make durable coatings for cookware and are water and stain resistant for carpets, cloths and make paint scratch proof. They accumulate in the environment and do not break down easily (according to bewellbuzz.com). Because they are so resistant to being broken down and flushed from the body, PFC’s can easily accumulate in the human body. Naturalnews.com website states that one exposure can cause the chemical to remain in the body for a decade.

At present all Teflon products are PFOA free (according to healthline.com) but contain other PFC’s which are not currently banned. Will we find that other PFC’s are just as dangerous as PFOA? The jury is still out on that as the EPA only tests chemicals after there is evidence that they are harmful. But here is what we do know: Healthline.com states that Teflon starts breaking down when superheated more than 570 degrees. The overheating process releases toxic

chemicals into the air and if inhaled they could lead to Polymer fume fever or the Teflon flu. Flu like symptoms include fever, chills, body aches and headaches.

Other alternatives are to use stainless steel cookware, oven safe glass and cast iron. As for me, I will continue to scrub my cookware, not just because of concerns about PFC's for my family and I, but also as a stand to not support the making of items using these chemicals because of its potential harm to humans, animals and the environment.

If you think you have been overexposed to PFC's here is a nice cleansing essential oil blend you may consider to stimulate and support your systems: 3 drops of clove essential oil, 4 drops of juniper essential oil and 3 drops of patchouli all blended in 2 teaspoons of jojoba oil and applied on kidneys, under armpits and on the bottoms of the feet several times a day. Clove is a hot oil, so try on a small patch of skin first and dilute in more jojoba oil if needed.