

Toxic Chemicals and Health



Scientists agree that certain toxic chemicals in commerce have made their way into the air, water, soil, food supply and common household products. Research shows that these chemicals are entering the bodies of Americans and contributing to widespread diseases and disorders, many of which have lifelong consequences. As nurses, we are deeply concerned about the impacts of toxic chemicals on health.

Threats to health posed by toxic chemicals are multiple, severe, and increasing and include increased risk of diseases, disorders, societal impacts, economic devastation, even death.

- **Dramatic increases in exposure to toxic chemicals in the last four decades are threatening human reproduction and health**, according to the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), the first global reproductive health organization to take a stand on human exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Miscarriage and stillbirth, impaired fetal growth, congenital malformations, impaired or reduced neurodevelopment and cognitive function, ADHD behaviors and an increase in cancer are among the poor health outcomes linked to chemicals.
- Exposure to chemicals in the air, food and water supplies disproportionately affect poor people. Vulnerable populations, such as elderly, children, minorities, low-income communities, and those with chronic conditions are impacted the most.
- A year after a much-needed overhaul to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), the changes are inadequate to protect public health and the testing of chemicals is far too slow – just 20 chemicals at a time with a deadline of seven years per chemical.

Strong and immediate action needs to be taken to protect human health. The Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments **strongly supports** efforts to:

- Ensure the U.S. takes strong leadership action to address toxic chemicals in commerce and advance toxic reduction solutions
- Ensure full implementation of revised TSCA, reversing the drop off in enforcement during the first six-month period of the Trump EPA.
- Ensure adequate funding for the EPA to carry out its role as a public health agency and enforce regulations that protect our air, land, and water and promote health.
- Prevent further EPA appointments of former chemical industry representatives that directly conflict with the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

For more information, contact the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments:

Katie Huffling, MS, RN, CNM, Executive Director – katie@enviRN.org

Cara Cook, MS, RN, AHN-BC, Climate Change Program Coordinator – cara@enviRN.org