

Study: Fast-food comes with a side of chemicals

By John Tozzi, Bloomberg

People who reported eating fast food in the last 24 hours had elevated levels of some industrial chemicals in their bodies, according to an analysis of data from federal nutrition surveys.

The study is the first broad look at how fast food may expose the public to certain chemicals, called phthalates, that are used to make plastics more flexible and durable. The chemicals, which don't occur in nature, are common in cosmetics, soap, food packaging, flooring, window blinds, and other consumer products. The Centers for Disease Control says "phthalate exposure is widespread in the U.S. population."

Though the health consequences of encountering these substances aren't fully known, scientists have increasingly focused on their effects on health and development, particularly for pregnant women and children. Research in rats has shown that they can disrupt the male reproductive system, and there's evidence for similar effects in humans.

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