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WHAT PRICE TECHNOLOGY?

By

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Many alternative healthcare practitioners are now recommending a detoxification program for most of us over the age of 40. Living in an industrialized society certainly has many benefits in terms of convenience and access to information. There is a plentiful supply of material goods used in the creation of many commercial products, including plastics, metals, and other synthetic materials. However, with the manufacturing of such materials, we have the problem of chemical pollution and disposal problems. The toxins we generate threaten our air and water supply. Most well-informed people will not even consider drinking unfiltered tap water in our cities.

As a plastic surgeon with over twenty years of experience placing foreign material into people's bodies, I have also become aware of another form of pollution, namely the placement of multiple implants in the body. How does the body deal with the breakdown of these foreign materials? I have personal experience with a number of these implant materials, including mercury amalgams, breast implants filled with both saline and silicone, a silicone chin implant, and tattoo pigments for eyeliner. In surgical training we are taught that these implants are inert and in general well tolerated by the body unless the implant becomes secondarily infected. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily true, and I have come to believe from years of experience dealing with silicone breast implants, that there is probably nothing that you can place in the human body that the body will not attempt to break down. Silicone implants in the body are broken down over time through a lipolysis reaction, and the engineering data shows that implants regularly fail either by the contents leaking out or by frank rupture of the implant elastomer shell, usually within eight to 15 years. The same implants sitting on the shelf are unaffected, for they are not exposed to the enzyme systems, which affect the implants inside the body. Just as the nuclear facilities have found it difficult to find containers to contain nuclear waste, plastic surgeons have found it difficult to find containers that will contain saline or silicone gel or other filler material over time. As we go through life, we are all exposed to a variety of pesticides, heavy metals, plastics of all sorts, from those lining aluminum cans to those present on IV catheters. I wonder just how much foreign material is introduced into the human body over a lifetime. Of course, natural detoxification and elimination methods do exist to handle much of this load. However, biochemical analysis of the majority of people in industrialized society show high levels of many substances, including aluminum, mercury, lead, and other heavy metals. It is exactly these lab findings that have led holistic practitioners to recommend detoxification programs.

Some substances are relatively easy to eliminate from the body and others are more difficult. The toxic effects of silicone gel implants is one such difficult dilemma. The silicone gel that leaks out through the capsule is taken up by the macrophages (white cells that eat bacteria and other foreign invaders) and is distributed throughout the body. We are not only dealing with this silicone gel, but also with the breakdown products including silicate, which can crystallize in nerve sheath. There are a myriad of other chemicals and heavy metals used in the manufacturing process of silicone gel implants, including platinum, that may be difficult to eliminate from the body.

The chemistry of silicone in the body is not well studied, but we do know that silicone penetrates cell membranes and interferes with enzyme systems. Based on the paucity of information, it is no wonder that the systemic diseases associated with the widespread dissemination of silicone throughout the body have not yet been carefully studied. From clinical experience, I can tell you that the disease course is very similar in many of the women that I see for explanations. It appears that the severity of the disease does correlate with the amount of time that the silicone has been leaking out of the implants. If this process has been occurring for more than ten years, the detoxification process, including the removal of the implants, is less likely to restore the patient to full health than if the implants are removed prior to this time.

In some patients, we also have a complicating factor of a coating of polyurethane placed around the implants, which disassociates itself from the implant and is embedded in the scar capsule surrounding the implant. The breakdown products of polyurethane are felt to be carcinogenic, and the mechanism of the disposal of these products is not yet well defined. Clinically, these women have a

different illness than the woman with pure silicone gel leakage. Implant removal often results in a dramatic improvement in their symptoms, provided that the scar capsules with the embedded polyurethane are totally removed.

There is a theory that it is the cumulative effect of these toxins that leads to the free radical formation and subsequent accelerated aging that appears to occur after the age of forty. A whole science of anti-aging theories and technologies is currently being developed. Advanced methods exist to eliminate the free radicals and detoxify the body of a number of chemicals, heavy metals and other contaminants within the body. It is well-established that certain conditions within the bowels can lead to “leaky gut” syndrome and allow large molecules to enter the body and produce autoimmune reactions that may affect the joints and other tissues. Given the rapid reversal of arthralgias and conditions such as bursitis after removal of leaking silicone gel implants, and knowing what we know about silicone acting as an adjuvant in the immune system, I feel that we have much to learn about the mechanism of autoimmune disease in relationship to these foreign substances. The Gulf War syndrome is another example of this, with a possible etiology being the adjuvant “squalene” as the initiating agent of this syndrome. The Gulf War syndrome has many characteristics similar to silicone immune dysfunction, including not only the autoimmune, but also the neurological components. Could these foreign materials that we introduce to our bodies through vaccines, implants, prosthesis, and ingestion of contaminated food and water sources be contributing to the epidemic of autoimmune disease that we are seeing in our society? Of course, many links have been made to toxic chemicals, which are carcinogenic. Detoxification programs, including chelation therapy, removal of mercury amalgams, and restoration of gut intestinal flora with elimination of pathogenic flora, are a standard treatment of cancer in Europe. We should also consider the epidemic of cardiovascular disease in this country. Heart disease is associated with free-radical damage to the heart vessels and does respond to methods that will eliminate free radicals, such as chelation therapy. And what of immune dysfunction in general with the variety of viral, bacterial and fungal infections that affect our population? A healthy immune system can not exist if foreign chemicals, heavy metals, and nutritional deficiencies are constantly bombarding it.

It is not what we know, but what we do not know about the effect of this multitude of chemicals, plastics (including silicone), metals, drugs and their metabolites to which we expose our bodies. What are the effects on enzyme systems, cell membranes, DNA damage and interference with repair mechanisms, and the effect on mitochondria energy production? No wonder we currently have epidemics of energy disorders such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and atypical autoimmune diseases, which evade traditional medical understanding.

Take a moment to survey your own life style choices, including dental amalgams, implants, internal prosthetic devices, suture material left within the body, tattoos, hair pigments, personal care products such as shampoos, conditioners, deodorants and antiperspirants, aftershave lotions, perfumes, and cosmetics, residue from dry cleaning, food additives, drugs and their breakdown products, and chemical contamination of our food, air and water sources. It is clear that, since vast numbers of these contaminants gain access to our bodies, we should encourage government and academic research institutions to study the science of detoxification. It is imperative to prevent contamination as well as to help speed the removal of contaminants from the human body. How many of the degenerative diseases, including heart disease, arthritis and cancer, are truly preventable, given the proper technology of detoxification and education for prevention? How many dollars do we spend every year treating these diseases and what is the cost to society when so many of our citizens are disabled by these conditions? What price are we paying and what price will our children pay?

If this research is not supported, and our government and regulatory agencies do not take the responsibility of passing legislation that will protect us from the chemical pollution of our air, water and food supplies, then WHO will protect us?

As a consumer, you have the power of choice. Some choices that will benefit your health and the environment include non-mercury dental materials, organic foods, purified water, natural body-care products and minimization of dry cleaning.

Suggested Reading

The Naked Truth About Breast Implants: From Harm to Healing by Susan E. Kolb, M.D., F.A.C.S., A.B.I.H.M.
Visit www.TheNakedTruthAboutBreastImplants.com to read about Dr. Kolb’s personal experiences and extensive knowledge of the potential dangers associated with silicone and saline breast implants.

Goddess Shift: Women Leading for a Change by Stephanie Marohn
Visit www.goddessshift.com to read about the anthology of over 40 women leaders in diverse fields of human endeavor where Dr. Kolb is a contributing author.