

# The newest endocrine-disruptor can be found in your backyard, claims a NYTimes op-ed

By ACSH Staff — May 12, 2014



It s starting to feel a little bit like summer on the East coast

now, which means people are clean up their yards and gardens. And that means using chemicals, which [according to](#) <sup>[1]</sup> an op-ed by physician Diane Lewismay in the *NY Times*, can end up in drinking water. Is that true? And if so, are these chemicals (generally pesticides and weed-killing herbicides) actually associated with an increased risk of cancer and hormonal disruption?

In support of her scary thesis, she highlights a study done by the United States Geological Survey from 1999 which found that the majority of the sources of our drinking water contain at least one pesticide. The theory is that they disrupt, or throw out of whack, the endocrine system, made up of glands and hormones that control almost every aspect of our bodies functions. This claim is supported by a scientific statement from the Endocrine Society, released in 2009, which showed growing evidence that there are significant health threats caused by endocrine-disrupting substances in our environment.

As ACSH s Dr. Josh Bloom has said many times before, We at ACSH have been fighting an uphill battle against the pseudo-scientific term, endocrine-disruptor for years. According to radical environmental groups and others with similar anti-chemical agendas, we are being bathed in these things and they are doing serious, chronic harm to all of us. Well, this is just nonsense and is used by those who want to keep America in a panic for their own ulterior motives, usually having to do with generating publicity and donations.

He goes on to explain what this term really means. There are multiple chemicals, both endogenous (in the body) and drugs, that bind to hormone receptors and elicit pharmacological effects. Common examples include hormone replacement therapy (used for menopausal symptoms), estrogen modulators (such as tamoxifen, used to treat certain types of breast cancer) and thyroid hormone replacement. They don t disrupt anything. They work by a known mechanism and do what they are supposed to do. Yet, the term is thrown around carelessly to include anything that may bind to a hormone receptor no matter how weakly. This bizarre theory, lacking any support nor any clinical evidence, is closely linked to the low-dose hypothesis, which purports

to explain how tiny levels of a chemical can cause effects lacking from larger doses. This too is mere pedantry and is completely without merit, like endocrine disruption itself.

The bottom line? The groups advocating against the use of these chemicals are just trying to scare the public, but their claims are not based on science.

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**Links**

[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/opinion/sunday/the-toxic-brew-in-our-yards.html>