



ARSENIC, CADMIUM, & LEAD EXPOSURE

Information for the General Public

Much of the Puget Sound Basin including Vashon Island has soils with elevated levels of the toxic heavy metals lead, arsenic and cadmium. People are exposed to these metals primarily through accidental ingestion, and the most exposed population is children under the age of six. However, once exposed to these heavy metals, toxic effects may be observed indefinitely into the future, even if the exposure has stopped.

Heavy metal exposure can have symptoms that are chronic and subtle. Often the symptoms of heavy metal toxicity resemble those of other diseases, and it is important to eliminate other sources before a diagnosis is made.

Some of the symptoms of exposure to heavy metals include:

- General malaise: fatigue and disrupted sleep
- Unexplained weight loss or anorexia
- Immune system deficiencies leading to poor resistance to infectious diseases
- Calcium deficiency, as seen through fragile bones, a tendency towards tooth decay or yellowing of teeth, and muscle cramping, especially among pregnant women
- Neurological problems, including difficulty maintaining balance, loss of or

reduced sense of smell, difficulty with language tasks, decreased school performance, and tingling or loss of feeling in hands and feet

- Mild chronic gastrointestinal distress
- Anemia, especially if non-responsive to iron therapy
- Cancers of the skin, lungs, bladder, kidneys, liver and prostate
- Non-cancer disease of the kidney and lungs
- High blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, especially at a young age or when family history and lifestyle factors are negative

If you or a member of your family an individual has a cluster of these symptoms, the cause **may** be chronic heavy metal toxicity. Further queries and testing may be called for.

Consult your health care provider.

RESOURCES:

Institute for Environmental Research and Education
<http://www.iere.org/vashon-metals.html>

Seattle and King County Public Health
<http://www.metrokc.gov/health/hazard/hazindex.htm>

Bastyr Center for Natural Health
http://www.bastyrcenter.org/p_hysicians/

This information provided courtesy of the Heavy Metals Remediation Committee of the Vashon-Maury Island Community Council