## CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

## Are you being poisoned?

Five volunteers tested by Environment Illinois were surprised to find out their bodies contained toxic chemicals—all from using everyday products

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Pilsen resident Dorian Breuer, 35, is a vegetarian who bikes to work and tries to stay healthy.

That's why he was surprised to find 11 different toxic chemicals in his body and another in his urine after he submitted to testing by a local environmental group. In fact, all five of the volunteers tested by Environment Illinois — and 30 others tested nationwide by other groups — had such chemicals in their bodies, according to a report released Thursday.



Dorian Breuer, 35, of Chicago, was a participant in the study at UIC. Common household goods were found to contain harmful chemicals. (Jean Lachat/Sun-Times)

"Everybody has these toxic chemicals in them," said Max Muller, an advocate for Environment Illinois. "Most people don't even know it."

Health risk disputed: The chemicals, including so-called phthalates, bisphenol A and PBDEs, are found in baby bottles, shower curtains, cosmetics, computers and other products. They leach "out of the products into our bodies," the report states.

The American Chemistry Council, however, said the study largely only showed trace amounts of the chemicals and doesn't prove the chemicals have an adverse impact on human health.

"Biomonitoring indicates presence," the statement said. "It doesn't mean there is a significant health risk."

The group cited research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that found levels of bisphenol A in the U.S. population, for example, "far below levels that could cause harm."

But Peter Orris, a professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health, said it's not clear what levels are safe. He said because of the prevalence of these chemicals in society, it's almost impossible for an individual to prevent exposure.

Muller said the 80,000 chemicals in commerce today should be screened for safety before they are introduced to the market. As of now, unlike the government's approval process for pharmacueticals, no such pre-testing exists.

State Rep. Elaine Nekritz (D-Northbrook), who also was tested and found to have chemicals in her system, recently got the state Legislature to approve \$250,000 to set up a more extensive biomonitoring program, but the funding was vetoed by Gov. Blagojevich.