

## **We live in a toxic world**

We live in a toxic world. Whether you live next to an oil refinery or on a pristine mountaintop in the Rockies, you carry environmental toxins in your tissues. From heavy metals like arsenic, lead, mercury, and cadmium — emitted from smokestacks and vehicle exhaust — to pesticides, fertilizers, and PCB's released into rivers and soil, and phthalates that off-gas from household plastic products, we are all swimming in a soup of toxic chemicals.

### **Minimize exposure**

Environmental toxins affect all bodily systems and have been linked to the development of endocrine, immune, reproductive, metabolic, cardiovascular, cognitive, and behavioral disorders. The nervous system is especially vulnerable to toxic exposure. The brain is made up primarily of lipids. And because most environmental toxins are lipid-soluble — that is, they dissolve easily in lipids — brain tissue is particularly sensitive to them. A number of neurodegenerative ailments have been linked to toxin exposure, including Parkinson's disease, ALS, learning disabilities, conduct disorders, and certain dementias. Many neurological symptoms of toxic exposure are common and not linked to a specific disease, including headaches, fatigue, impaired concentration and memory, and insomnia.

Those are sobering facts, but there are ways to protect yourself. Two primary strategies to reduce the impact of environmental toxins on your health are: 1) minimize exposure and absorption in the first place, and 2) develop a routine to detoxify your body on a regular basis.