ForeWord Reviews

HEALTH & FITNESS

Dodging the Toxic Bullet: How to Protect Yourself from Everyday Environmental Health Hazards

David R. Boyd
Greystone Books
978-1-55365-454-4
(Mar 2, 2010)

"Each day the average person slathers on nine personal care products that can contain more than 120 different chemicals": body lotion, shampoo, cosmetics, perfume, powder, hair spray, and deodorant. "While the concentrations of these chemicals are generally low, their effects on health can be significant," David R. Boyd writes in *Dodging the Toxic Bullet*.

More than a guide on how to avoid everyday toxins, this book advocates for a healthy planet and the well-being of all people, including those without the means to protect themselves. The author, a practitioner and teacher of environmental law, believes there need to be "stronger laws to protect present and future generations."

For Boyd, protecting one's health from environmental hazards boils down to three critical steps: be aware of the environmental hazards you are likely to encounter and ignore those that pose either little or no risk; eliminate sources of hazards; and limit your exposure. This includes the air you breathe, the food you eat, the water you drink, the things you buy or use, and the physical hazards you face. Each chapter ends with a useful wrap-up and offers a few simple actions that can diminish the risks posed by a toxic environment, whether on a personal basis or at a global level.

For instance, he suggests avoiding seven harmful substances commonly found in things people buy and use: lead, mercury, vinyl (also known as PVC), phthalates, bisphenol A (BPA), polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), and perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs). He points out that lead "poses a threat in consumer products, including toys, crystal glassware, costume jewelry, hair dyes, mini-blinds, and make-up." He recommends eating meals "rich in calcium, iron, and Vitamin C to help block the absorption and storage of lead in your body."

In a chapter on promoting a healthier environment, he calls for a "triple-E approach" which requires more effective, efficient, and equitable government politics and major changes to business practices to safeguard environmental health.

Although the advice can be obvious ("Live in a healthy home") or simplistic ("Protect

yourself from wildfires”), it is sincere and meant as a practical way to protect readers from “the invisible epidemic”: disease and illness caused by environmental hazards that may be rarely sensed, but which are everywhere.