



Health Yourself Byte

CELL PHONES AND THEIR HEALTH RISK

Cell phones emit radiofrequency (RF) energy which is a form of electromagnetic radiation. Electromagnetic radiation can be divided into two (2) types: ionizing and non-ionizing. Ionizing radiation, such as that produced by x-ray machines, can pose a cancer risk. Studies suggest that the amount of RF energy produced by cell phones is too low to cause significant tissue heating or an increase in body temperature but more research is needed.



In May 2011, the World Health Organization listed cell phone use in the same carcinogenic hazard as lead, engine exhaust and chloroform. They found some evidence of an increase in glioma and acoustic neuroma brain cancer for mobile phone users, but have not been able to draw conclusions for other types of cancer.

A cell phone user's level of exposure to RF energy depends on several factors including:

- The number and duration of calls.
- The amount of cell phone traffic at a given time.
- The distance from the nearest cellular base station. (Cell phones emit the most radiation when they are attempting to connect to cellular towers. A moving phone, or a phone in a weak area like an elevator, building and rural area, has to work harder and gives off more radiation.)
- The quality of the cellular transmission
- The size of the handset.
- Whether or not a hands-free device is used.

To be on the safe side, here are some good rules to follow:

1. Allow children to use cell phones only in emergencies (Children's skulls and scalps are thinner and their cells are dividing faster so the impact of the radiation might be much greater)
2. Try to keep your cell phone away from your body by using a wireless headset.
3. Use a land-line phone for long conversations.
4. Switch ears when talking on a cell phone so one side of the body isn't overexposed to radiation.

Bottomline: Studies don't indicate that cell phones are safe nor do they yet CLEARLY show that they are dangerous. But, growing evidence indicates a need for more research!



The Medical
Center of Plano