

Burning plastic can inflame your lungs

By : Editor Published On : 20 Nov, 2019 10:10 AM IST



INVC NEWS

Mumbai ,

Even though we are now well aware of the severely adverse effects of plastic and pollution, ignorant practices still continue without realizing the kind of impact they might hold on the human body, other living creatures and even the environment as a whole.

One such highly common and ignorant practice is that of burning plastic waste which reportedly contains carbon and hydrogen in large quantities. These compounds (carbon and hydrogen) mix with chloride which is most commonly present in food waste. When plastic waste is burnt, these compounds are set on a fire and a burning mixture of them releases an extremely harmful gas that is especially hazardous for humans.

Among the many chemicals created while burning plastics are dioxin and furan. When this gas or dioxins (a group of highly toxic chemical compounds) are inhaled, instant reactions are observed in the form of coughing, shortness of breath, dizziness, etc. Long-term exposure has also been reported to be capable of leading to cancer. Dioxin is also referred to as a human carcinogen and is the most potent synthetic carcinogen which if inhaled can have deadly consequences.

A myth surrounding the burning of plastic waste is that the toxins go up in the air but what is often not realized is that all those particles eventually, come down and remain suspended in the air.

Many dangerous pollutants such as mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins and furans also enter the soil or water where they tend to remain for years and years, that way these toxins even accumulate in food crops, animals and fish that people eat. Wildlife too is endangered by these toxins.

If people were enough informed about the harms that burning plastic waste brings, then maybe there would be some who would think and stop this practice of burning household garbage and plastic. The effects of burning plastic is severe on the environment especially in the form of air pollution as it releases

several toxic pollutants and gases in the air which holds serious health consequences for one and all.

Dioxins have also been known as hormone disruptors also. They even accumulate in the body and that way the mothers end up giving it directly to their babies via the placenta. Dioxins can also settle on the crops and in waterways where they can wind up in food said Dr. Shivaraj A L, Consultant - Pulmonologist, Columbia Asia Hospital Whitefield.

Some of the health dangers that come along with burning plastic waste is:

- Increased risk of heart disease
- Aggravated respiratory ailments like asthma and emphysema
- Skin rashes, nausea, or headaches
- Damage to the nervous system
- Damage to the kidneys and liver
- Disruption in the reproductive, endocrinal and development systems

Since the burning of plastic leaves air filled with some particles and gases, its inhalation severely affects human health. Smoke inhalation can inflame lungs and airway, leaving them swollen and also blocking oxygen which can further cause serious respiratory issues. Burning waste and the gases which are produced as a result of that are likely to cause smoke inhalation by simple asphyxiation (lack of oxygen), chemical irritation, chemical asphyxiation, or a combination of them. These compounds that are produced in the fires can also damage the body cells by interfering with oxygen delivery.

Inhalation injuries can even worsen heart and lung conditions, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, etc.

COPD is a group of progressive lung diseases. COPD is a chronic inflammatory lung disease that obstructs the airflow from the lungs. Burning of plastic increases air pollution a person who is regularly exposed to breathing in air pollution holds a higher risk of getting COPD. If the person is a smoker himself/herself then the risk of COPD is even higher. If a person is already affected by COPD and lives in a place highly inflicted with air pollution or an area that is mostly surrounded by smoke, his/her symptoms can worsen and the situation can decrease his/her quality of life. This can even result in frequent COPD attacks (also called "exacerbations"). Symptoms of COPD include breathing difficulty, cough, mucus (sputum) production and wheezing.

Long-term exposure to chemical irritants released in the air by burning of waste can also lead to COPD. It is important to get adequate and timely treatment for COPD as untreated, COPD can lead to a faster progression of the disease, heart problems, and worsening respiratory infections.

COPD can cause complications like:

- Respiratory infections
- Heart problems
- Lung cancer

- High blood pressure in lung arteries
- Depression

To avoid being affected by COPD, it is crucial to avoid second hand smoke and chemical fumes, get adequate nutrition required by the body, and doing safe exercise.

URL : <https://www.internationalnewsandviews.com/burning-plastic-can-inflate-your-lungs/>



12th year of news and views excellency

Committed to truth and impartiality

Copyright © 2009 - 2019 International News and Views Corporation. All rights reserved.
