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Dave McClure • Feb. 09, 2015

We've largely debunked the decade-old claim that cell phones held against the ear over time may cause death from brain cancer. But the topic will not go away, and in fact continues to grow.

In part, this is because some organizations continue to churn out "studies" purporting to show a definite link between radiation from cell phones and cancer. Having been forced in my youth to study statistical analysis not once but three times, I don't trust these studies, for three reasons:

1. The conclusions are based on small sample sizes, with no appropriate control groups and some major leaps in assumed cause and effect.
2. The studies are either published only in newspapers, or in professional publications that offer no fact-checking, peer review or other safeguards. I automatically disregard any such studies published in Great Britain for this reason.
3. There just hasn't been enough research on either side of the issue to draw sweeping conclusions.

That said, it is not safe to assume that cell phones and other electro-magnetic products do not represent threats to your health. Though cell phones currently in use in the United States are generally safe, newer and more powerful models are being introduced on a regular basis. And the Federal Communications Commission makes additional spectrum available nearly every year, with minimal testing of how these new frequencies may affect human health when used for new and untried tasks.

The situation is further complicated by the sheer number of technologies and devices that emit radiation. It is virtually impossible to determine whether the cancer may

be caused by a cell phone or the electronic ignition system of your automobile.

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world, particularly in high-stress jobs like tax preparation. With improvements in these devices, it has been years since we have seen interference with a pacemaker's rhythm from household appliances such as microwave ovens, televisions, radios, stereos, vacuum cleaners, electric brooms, electric blankets, electric knives, hair dryers, shavers, gardening machinery, toasters, food processors or can openers. This does not mean, however, that other devices may not affect pacemakers. Security surveillance cameras, metal detectors, MRI scanning equipment, welding equipment, powerful magnets and cell phones are being studied to determine if there is a measurable level of risk. Also under serious study are earphones and ear buds, which emit radiation and are notoriously poorly shielded. Bluetooth earphones appear to have little or no such risk.

- **For women, carrying the cell phone in their bra.** Some women prefer the convenience of carrying a smaller cell phone and storing it (in casual situations) in their bra. There is no proven correlation between this and increases in breast cancer, but it could be problematic if the woman is genetically or otherwise pre-disposed to breast cancer.
- **For men, carrying a phone in front pockets or on a belt clip.** Testicular cancer is a common though treatable form that strikes young men. But this is not the only threat. In the past three years, numerous studies have indicated that radiation from electronic devices can contribute to erectile dysfunction and ability to conceive. Finally, a 2009 study indicates that this radiation may affect bone density in the pelvic region.
- **Wearing a device next to your body.** It is not just cell phones that may be problematic, but any type of MP3 player or other device. That emits electronic radiation.

Continued and reliable research, combined with advances in technologies and emission capabilities, may well show that no risk exists in use of these devices. In the

meantime, there are three actions a prudent professional should take:

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