



The health impacts of glyphosate

Presentation by Génon K. Jensen, Executive Director, Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)

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Why are all of us on this panel so committed to getting a ban on glyphosate?

Well, there are obviously both environmental and health reasons – but I am going to focus on the health impacts of glyphosate.

First, because it probably causes cancer

It is not me saying that!

In June 2015, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, the gold standard in identifying carcinogens, **classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans"**.

Second, it is also potentially an endocrine disrupting chemical and this would be extremely worrying.

These are the substances which interfere with the workings of our hormone systems and are associated with cancers and many other serious conditions. Scientific evidence links exposure to hormone disrupting chemicals to spiralling rates of hormone-related cancers such as breast, prostate and testicular cancer, fertility problems, diabetes and obesity as well as learning and behavioural problems in children.

Third, because new research is also showing reasons for concern

Just last month, new research from King's College Londonⁱ showed that low doses of glyphosate – equivalent to levels to which we all are regularly exposed – provoked fatty liver disease in laboratory rats. Fatty liver disease is increasingly common in humans and can lead to liver cancer.

We are particularly concerned because:

Glyphosate is in our bodies

Tests show traces of glyphosate in the urine of 90% of samples taken in Malta, 70% in Germany and Great Britain, **55% here in Belgium**

Its massive use is increasing

The world is now awash with glyphosate, up to 800,000 tonnes worldwide is used – and that increase is showing up in our urine!

In Germany, the percentage of the population with glyphosate in their urine increased six-fold between 2001 and 2015 – from 10% of samples showing residues to 60% now.

Some of us are particularly vulnerable

When I go to a park now, I can't help but think about the risks when I see children crawling on the grass. Babies and toddlers put their hands in their mouths – and they also absorb a far higher proportion of what they consume.

It seems simply wrong that we are unintentionally exposing our children – ourselves, our pets, wildlife.

But this is also an amazing opportunity for avoiding cancer cases in the future

So, doctors, nurses and cancer groups are going to be helping our campaign.

Last year, European cancer groups held a meeting with MEPs Against Cancerⁱⁱ because they are not only concerned with treating cancer but also with preventing it before it starts.

Cancer groups in France, Malta, the UK and Belgium are serious in taking this up as an important opportunity in cancer prevention.

For example, the French cancer league called for a ban on glyphosate that was signed by more than 150,000 people. Sales of glyphosate to individuals have been restricted as a result.

Let's face it, cancer is something that people dread more than anything else.

One in three men and one in four women in the *European Union* develop cancer during their lifetime. There has been a massive increase in cancer incidence over the 20 years.

Isn't it time to reap the benefits of primary prevention of cancer by getting rid of glyphosate and reducing pesticide use?

We CAN reduce the number of people getting cancer by preventing exposure to glyphosate and harmful pesticides.

Let's start signing up to the European Citizens' Initiative as part of a major effort to put the European Commission back on track to protect peoples' health, not industry profit!

ⁱ <http://www.env-health.org/resources/press-releases/article/low-dose-long-term-exposure-to>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.env-health.org/resources/press-releases/article/meps-against-cancer-consider>, <http://www.env-health.org/spip.php?page=searchresults&cx=012093988327528523172%3Ag7b4mwiykuu&cof=FORID%3A11&ie=UTF-8&q=MEPS+and+Glyphosate&sa=Search>