



CHAPTER THREE

Is Your Home a Healthy Home?

How common household chemicals may gradually be making you and your family sick.

by John K. Beaulieu

IS YOUR HOME A HEALTHY HOME?

It's alarming but true—scientists and doctors have discovered that there is a connection between our health and the use of common everyday household chemicals. If yours is the typical home, you probably use dozens of cleaning and personal care products, purchased at the local grocery store, which contain chemical ingredients that could be harmful to your health and the health of your loved ones.

Since World War II, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of man-made chemicals we use in our homes. The typical home now contains over sixty-three hazardous products that together contain hundreds of different chemicals.¹ At the same time there has been an equally dramatic rise in the incidence of certain chronic health problems. Research indicates that it is more than coincidence that the dramatic rise in these various diseases has coincided with the increased use of hazardous, man-made chemicals in the home.

HAVE WE ALWAYS BEEN THIS SICK?

At the beginning of the 20th century the cancer incidence rate was about one in fifty. Today in the US, one in three women and one in two men will suffer with cancer some time in their lives. Cancer is the number two killer of adults and the leading cause of death from disease in children.²

The incidence of central nervous system disorders like Alzheimer's and Multiple Sclerosis increases annually.

Birth defects are on the rise as well. Over 150,000 babies are born with defects each year for reasons unknown. Another 500,000 babies

1 World Resources Institute, *The 1994 Information Please Environmental Almanac* (Houghton-Mifflin, 1994).

2 American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures 2004*.

