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The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide: A Jargon-Free Guide to the Chemicals of Everyday Life

John Emsley

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How many top-selling perfumes are made entirely from synthetic chemicals? Are artificial sweeteners perfectly safe? Which has more saturated fat: butter or coconut oil? How many people have died by being poisoned with the world's most toxic chemicals, the dioxins? Does PVC packaging and plastic wrap cause cancer by contaminating food? Is nitrate from fertilizers polluting drinking water and causing "blue-baby syndrome" and stomach cancer? Is carbon dioxide from fossil fuels really the main cause of global warming? The unexpected answers to these and many other topical questions can be found in "The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide", which exposes the misinformation and misinformation that surround many of the controversial chemicals we meet in daily life. The guide explains in accessible, non-technical language the science behind sugar and artificial sweeteners; cholesterol, animal fats and fibre; painkillers, and the risks associated with taking drugs; plastics and PVC; dioxins and nitrates in the environment; and carbon dioxide and the greenhouse gases. Also included are chapters on two products which are entirely chemical, but commonly not thought of as such: perfume and alcohol. Here, the reader discovers that not only do fragrance chemicals give a great deal of innocent pleasure, but that their synthetic versions have been responsible for reducing the large-scale slaughter of some wild animals; and that alcohol can not only improve the quality of life, it may even prolong it. "The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide" is for anyone, with or without a scientific background, who has been worried, sometimes alarmed, by stories which suggest that these chemicals are dangerous, polluting or unhealthy. This book won the general section of the Rhone-Poulenc Prize for Science in 1995.

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