

Antibacterial soaps may cause epigenetic changes to fetus

As the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) mulls over whether to rein in the use of common antibacterial compounds that are causing growing concern among environmental health experts, scientists are reporting today that many pregnant women and their fetuses are being exposed to these substances. They will present their work at the 248th National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the world's largest scientific society.

"We looked at the exposure of pregnant women and their fetuses to triclosan and triclocarban, two of the most commonly used germ-killers in soaps and other everyday products," says Benny Pycke, Ph.D. "We found triclosan in all of the urine samples from the pregnant women that we screened. We also detected it in about half of the umbilical cord blood samples we took, which means it transfers to fetuses. Triclocarban was also in many of the samples."

Showing what effect antimicrobials have on people is a challenge. But Pycke's colleague Laura Geer, Ph.D., of the State University of New York, found at least one interesting result. Geer says the study yielded a link between women with higher levels of another ubiquitous antimicrobial, butyl paraben, which is commonly used in cosmetics, and shorter newborn lengths. The long-term consequences of this are not clear, but Geer adds that, if this finding is confirmed in larger studies, it could mean that widespread exposure to these compounds could cause a subtle but large-scale shift in birth sizes.

Read the full, original story: [Pregnant women, fetuses exposed to antibacterial compounds face potential health risks](#)