



What Goes Up Must Come Down

Did you know?

Burning of household garbage is a major uncontrolled source of pollution in Canada.

Burning garbage at home or cottage is one of the largest known sources of dioxins and furans in Ontario.

Dioxins and furans are a large family of more than 200 similar toxic substances. Exposure to dioxins and furans is associated with a number of serious adverse health affects.

Dioxins released into the air from burning garbage fall onto leaves of plants that farm animals eat. When we eat the fats in food products from animals raised on those plants, we ingest dioxins.



UP IN SMOKE?

Burning waste — including packaging, plastics, treated wood, even newspaper and junk mail — in barrels, woodstoves, fireplaces, outdoor furnaces, or open pits releases a large number of pollutants including:

- dioxins
- furans
- arsenic
- styrenes
- barium
- mercury
- chromium
- PCBs
- particulates
- lead
- cadmium
- halogenated hydrocarbons
- formaldehyde
- benzene
- carbon monoxide
- nitrogen oxides
- sulphur oxides
- polyaromatic hydrocarbons
- hydrochloric acid

Toxic pollutants released into the air by burning garbage fall back to earth as particles or in rain drops and contaminate water and plant surfaces, eventually making their way up the food chain and into the food we eat.

BUT WE'VE BURNED FOR YEARS...

In rural and small-city Ontario, 24% of respondents report burning their garbage (EnviroNics survey, March 2001). Burning garbage at home or in the backyard has been a longstanding practice, but we now understand that there are health consequences, so it's time to stop burning. Home garbage fires smoulder and burn at temperatures that create dioxins and furans and many other pollutants.



BURNING GARBAGE CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH MORE THAN YOU THINK!

Toxic pollutants, such as dioxins, can accumulate in the fat of animals and fish, which are then passed on to people when eaten.

Dioxin exposure has been linked to:

- Liver problems
- Impairment of the immune system, the endocrine system and reproductive functions
- Certain types of cancers
- Effects on children's developing nervous system and other developmental events

Pollutants in the smoke can also trigger respiratory health problems.



THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES TO BURNING!

- Choose to buy items with less packaging.
- Seek out local recycling options for recyclable waste.
- Compost organic waste such as food scraps, leaves and grass.
- Use the nearest garbage landfill or depot.

IF YOU'RE BURNING GARBAGE... YOU'RE MAKING POISON

**For more information contact Environment Canada
1-800-668-6767**