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a lifetime," says Zimmerman. "They also bought into the thinking that medicine is a certain and precise field. Based on some very painful experiences, they all learned that there really wasn't enough independent, objective research to back up these claims."

In her book, Zimmerman examines the origins of implants, the controversies that have emerged from their use, the misinformation about the risks involved, and the psychological and physiological effects on women who choose to undergo the surgery. All the women interviewed suffered in some way from their implants: their breasts became hard; the implants leaked or ruptured; or side effects appeared. Even Rebecca, Paula, and Mary—women who underwent breast reconstruction after mastectomy—were sorry they had opted for implants.

A hopeful note, says Zimmerman, is that almost all of the subjects emerged from their ordeal more enlightened and empowered women. Some started or joined support groups; others became health-care activists. And each, hoping to help other women, was brave enough to tell her story to Zimmerman. "There's a real perception now that saline is a lot safer than silicone," says Zimmerman. "But I advise anyone who is contemplating the procedure to talk to a lot of other women and to weigh the risks very, very carefully."

Toxic Shock

PESTICIDES LINGER IN THE HOME FOR WEEKS

Each year, 90 percent of all householders in the United States use a pesticide to rid their homes of fleas, ants, and cockroaches. After spraying, most consumers follow the product's recommendation and stay out of the sprayed area for several hours, thereby limiting inhalation of toxic vapors and contact with wet residues. What the label doesn't say is that chlorpyrifos, a chemical found in

most household pesticides, can linger in a room for two weeks. And children are especially vulnerable to the toxin, say researchers at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (EOHSI) in Piscataway.

In a study, plastic and plush toys were placed in two apartments an hour after spraying with household pesticides. "We found that the toys, especially the ones containing polyfill, absorbed a significant amount of pesticide vapors," says Paul J. Liroy, deputy director of EOHSI, a joint institute of Rutgers and the University

of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. "We also made videotaped observations of play sessions, recorded how often the children placed toys and hands in their mouths, and calculated the amount of pesticide they would have been exposed to if those toys and hands had been contaminated."

According to Liroy, scientists have yet to determine the long-term effects of exposure to chlorpyrifos. But he estimates that, at one week after spraying, a toddler might have more than 20 times allowable levels in his system. Some 39 percent of the exposure would come through the skin, with virtually all the rest coming through ingestion as children put residue-laden fingers or toys in their mouths. And chlorpyrifos, points out Liroy, is only one of many semivolatiles pesticides that could vaporize and contaminate objects in the home.

Parents can take several measures to eliminate exposure, says Liroy. Children's toys should be removed from the area or stored in a closed box, and sprays should be directed to cracks and crevices and not disseminated through the room. Windows should be opened to encourage ventilation. "Wait several days before placing toys back into a room," Liroy suggests. "And even afterwards, keep the toys in a closed chest when they are not in use."—BG □

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