

ENDOCRINE
DISRUPTION
TRACKER TOOL

Environmentally ubiquitous endocrine disrupting chemicals penetrate and alter the fabric of our bodies. The Endocrine Disruption Tracker Tool (EDTT) seeks to identify the presence of chemical endocrine disruptors by focusing on their impact on emotions. EDTT is adapted from a Premenstrual Symptom Tracker, which tracks emotional symptoms caused by the fluctuation of hormones during the menstrual cycle. EDTT expands the functional range to cover emotional symptoms caused by the production and interplay of both hormones and endocrine disrupting chemicals.

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete this 10-day review examining emotions considered “negative”, “unpleasant”, or “unhappy”. Take a moment each day during the investigation period to make observations about the emotional symptoms listed here. Note your observations in the chart.

Describe the emotional symptom.
How was it experienced and expressed?
What impact did it have on your daily life and your well-being?

Describe the situation in which you experienced the emotional symptom. Did the context explain or warrant the occurrence and intensity of the emotion? Or did it seem an overreaction? Did the emotion reflect an abrupt change of mood, appearing to descend out of the blue? Reflect on the possible influence of exposure to chemical disrupting chemicals on the emergence of the emotion and the degree to which it was felt.

Pay attention to emotions that you experienced on your own, but also to those you shared with or observed in others.

This diagram is a hand-drawn grid template designed for tracking various mood-related observations over time. The grid consists of approximately 10 columns and 10 rows. On the left side of the grid, there are ten categories of symptoms or observations, each corresponding to a row. These categories are:

- time and place of the observation
- felt depressed
felt sad, "down" or "blue"
felt hopeless or worthless
- felt anxious
felt tense
felt "keyed up" or "on edge"
- experienced mood swings
suddenly felt sad or tearful
was sensitive to rejection
feelings were easily hurt
- felt angry
felt annoyed or bitter
was irritable
- felt distracted
had difficulty concentrating
was agitated or frenzied
- felt lethargic
felt tired or fatigued
suffered a lack of energy
- felt numb
took less interest in usual activities
- had increased appetite or overate
had cravings for specific foods
lost appetite
- slept more or took naps
found it hard to get up
had trouble getting to sleep
had trouble staying asleep
- felt overwhelmed
was unable to cope
felt out of control

The grid itself is composed of light, hand-drawn lines forming a series of squares. Some of the vertical lines show slight variations in thickness or wavy patterns, suggesting they were drawn by hand. The overall style is informal and personal, suitable for a journal or a clinical record.

WHAT WE CAN LEARN WITH EDTT

The invisibility, extreme mobility, and complex interactivity of endocrine disrupting chemicals pose a major challenge for the gathering of evidence about their adverse effects on humans and wildlife. Studying endocrine disruptors necessitates the examination of a plurality of interactive factors, including the net effects of complex chemical mixtures; tissue-specific responses; critical windows of exposure across lifespan; the intricate problematics of epigenetic effects, which alter susceptibility to diseases throughout life and intergenerationally; and anomalous dose-response relationships making exposure harmful even at low concentrations. Endocrine disruption is thus a complex, multilayered issue that makes it difficult to establish linear causal links between exposures to endocrine disrupting chemicals and adverse health outcomes. Accordingly, EDTT cannot give definite answers about the state of endocrine disruption or the extent to which chemical endocrine disruptors affect the emotions. Rather, EDTT has been designed to raise awareness of the hidden, slow-moving, and emerging realities of chronic chemical disruption.

Locating the effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals in our anxiety, sadness, sleeplessness, irritability, and difficulty to concentrate foregrounds our shared – though unevenly – fragility and vulnerability vis-à-vis the chemical transformation of our planet. Reflecting upon the mobility and interactivity of chemical endocrine disruptors, and the porosity of the body as it absorbs and excretes chemicals, unsettles the atomistic conception of humans as bounded individuals, who are divorced from the broader collectivity of non-human life in a shared environment. Contemplating, reflecting upon, and experiencing the far-reaching effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals initiates cross-species solidarities and action rooted in interconnectedness, interdependency, and mutual becoming in the ever-changing and diminishing world. The question of what is to be done thereby emerges: how can we confront the power relations that make possible the chemical colonization of humans, other organisms, and the environment? How do we foster and exercise solidarities to oppose collectively what cannot be prevented by each of us individually?