

# ***The Truth About Teflon***

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Americans, to a very great extent, don't give a second thought about what they use to prepare their meals. Even if you're doing everything you know to do for you health by eating as much raw and unprocessed food as possible, it may not be enough, not if you're failing to be very selective in your food preparation. Take your cookware, for example. What about that skillet you use to lightly cook your favorite wild-caught fish? Can you trust it to be safe for you and your family? The answer is -- probably not... particularly if you use non stick cookware coated with **Teflon®**.

Teflon® is the most popular cookware in America, however you need to know that Teflon-coated aluminum contains *perfluorinated chemicals* (PFCs), including **perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)**, a synthetic chemical used in production that creates a soap-like slipperiness and nonstick finish. Once heated, Teflon® and other nonstick pans will quickly reach temperatures at which toxic fumes release into the air. And it doesn't take much heat to do this -- the coating begins to break down and release toxins at a temperature of only 446° F.

PPF has become very controversial because of potential health dangers... and DuPont with its patented Teflon® is right in the middle of the controversy. In May 2006, DuPont received a subpoena from the US Justice Department's Environmental Crimes Section to turn over documents about PFOA safety. This came just a month after DuPont settled a lawsuit, with **a fine of \$10.25 million** by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) alleging that DuPont hid health data about PFOA for twenty years. So why is PFOA so dangerous?

In animal studies, PFOA posed health hazards like:

- \* **Serious changes in organs** including the brain, prostate, liver, thymus, and kidneys, showing toxicity.
- \* **Death** of several rat pups due to PFOA exposure.
- \* **Changes in the pituitary** in female rats, at all doses. The pituitary

controls growth, reproduction, and many metabolic functions. Changes in the size of the pituitary indicate toxicity.

**\*PFOA has been associated with tumors in at least four different organs** in animal tests, and has been implicated in an increase in prostate cancer in PFOA plant workers. Now, the various PFOA doses used in these animal experiments weren't necessarily the same exposure levels you might get from Teflon. But they clearly show the potential danger from PPF.

**And just recently**, in a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), PPF was detected in close to 98% of the population. That's a startling revelation.

**\* A study reported in 2007**, and conducted by the John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, showed alarming evidence newborn infants face exposure to PFOA while in the womb. The research analysis detected PFOA in **100% of the newborns** examined.

**\* PFCs are also highly toxic to the environment**, both during the manufacture and disposal of nonstick cookware products.

While PFOA can come from sources other than Teflon®, this and other studies suggest the potential dangers of Teflon®. Though not necessarily related to Teflon®, PFOA, itself, has already been implicated in increased instances of cancer in the pancreas, liver, testicles, and mammary glands, as well as miscarriages, thyroid problems, weakened immune systems, and low organ weights.

While Teflon® is the brand of cookware that usually is associated with nonstick cooking, there are many other nonstick brand names that contain this toxic coating, PFOA, including: **Silverstone, Fluron, Supra, Excalibur, Greblon, Xylon, Duracote, Resistal, Autograph and T-Fal**, to name just a few. So, watch out for these as well.

Most recently, new research published in the journal *Human Reproduction* reveals that women with the highest levels of Perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs), including PFOA, in their blood are 150% more likely to have difficulty conceiving a child. Eating off nonstick cookware inevitably results in the consumption of these chemicals.

Perfluorinated chemicals (PFCs) are not only used in making products like Teflon, but also as a waterproof for clothing, for pesticides and for upholstery. Studies have also shown that they have leached in small quantities into the water supply, in part because they are contained in foam used by firefighters. This new study found that exposure to high levels of the chemicals, which can remain in the environment and the body for decades, could leave women struggling to get pregnant. Women with high levels of PFCs in their blood were up to one and a half times more likely to have taken more than a year to conceive or required fertility treatment than those with low levels. The study warns that the levels of exposure to the chemicals necessary to reduce fertility "are common in developed countries." Researchers looked at the levels of two of the chemicals, called *perfluorooctanoate* (PFOA) and *perfluorooctane sulfonate* (PFOS), in the bloodstreams of 1,240 women in Denmark who became pregnant between 1996 and 2002.

Dr. Chunyuan Fei, from the University of California, one of the co-authors of the study, said that previously PFOA and PFOS had been considered "biologically inactive." "But recently animal studies have shown that these chemicals may have a variety of toxic effects on the liver, immune system and developmental and reproductive organs," he said. "Very few human studies have been done, but one of our earlier studies showed that PFOA, although not PFOS, may impair the growth of babies in the womb, and another two epidemiological studies linked PFOA and PFOS to impaired fetal growth." His team speculates that both chemicals reduce fertility by affecting levels of female sex hormones. The chemicals have previously sparked controversy over suggestions that they could be linked to an increased risk of developing some forms of cancer. This study emphasizes the importance of remaining vigilant to potential environmental factors that may impact on fertility.

A spokesman for DuPont, which makes **Teflon®**, said: "We routinely evaluate findings from new research on PFOA. The weight of evidence continues to indicate to us that there is no health risk to the general public. A number of significant new epidemiological human health studies are being conducted which should address further questions relative to potential health effects of PFOA."

Even so-called "diamond" nonstick surfaces are easily scratched. A previous report by Natural News exposed the truth about so-called "diamond"

nonstick cookware surfaces.

The promotional literature for the Swiss Diamond pans sounds very promising, mostly because there's a strict avoidance of the word Teflon®. The word doesn't appear anywhere on the product box and, in fact, the Swiss Diamond website insists the product contains no Teflon® whatsoever! If you were to log onto the company's website, <http://www.swissdiamond.com/faq/faq>, and visit its Frequently Asked Questions documents, you would find this question . . . Does Swiss Diamond surface contain "Teflon®"? **Answer:** NO! The Swiss Diamond coating does not contain any Teflon®, taking into consideration that Teflon® is a trade mark, made and owned by "DUPONT."

So what does the nonstick cooking surface actually contain, then? The box describes it as a "*nano-composite*," which sounds really high-tech, Plus, "diamonds" are always strongly emphasized. The impression given is that whatever the nano-composite was made of, it would certainly be safer than Teflon®. If not Teflon®, then what is it? One researcher doing research on PFC's wrote the Swiss Diamond company and asked for an explanation of what the nano-composite material was made of. The e-mail reply stated, "Our patented nonstick surface uses a nano-composite of real diamond crystals and *PTFE*; it is applied using a computer controlled plasma gun at very high temperatures."

Wikipedia defines *Polytetrafluoroethylene* (PTFE) as a *fluoropolymer* discovered by Roy J. Plunkett (1910–1994) **of DuPont** in 1938. It was introduced as a commercial product in 1946, and is generally known to the public by DuPont's brand name **Teflon®**. Hey, wait a minute. In one breath, the Swiss Diamond website claims that it's nonstick product contained no Teflon®, and in the next it admits to using a *fluoropolymer*, "*generally known to the public by DuPont's brand name, **Teflon®***."

Sounds like doublespeak to me, but if you look again at the Swiss Diamond website screen capture, their very carefully worded answer now becomes clear. It states, "The Swiss Diamond coating does not contain any Teflon® taking into consideration that "Teflon®" is a trade mark, made and owned by DUPONT." So the pans don't contain Teflon®, they just contain the chemical called Teflon®. For the manufacturer to insist the Swiss Diamond pans contain no Teflon whatsoever, when, in fact, it is made primarily from *polytetrafluoroethylene*, the chemical widely known as

Teflon, is obviously and patently deceptive. The FAQ document on the Swiss Diamond website makes no effort to explain that their pans do contain PTFE, the chemical known as Teflon®. It simply insists they contain no Teflon®, and moves on to the next question.

So why do the chemicals remain legal in the US and other countries? Because they're made by powerful corporations like DuPont (the owner of the Teflon® trademark). Those corporations hold great sway over US regulators, and they routinely distort the truth to hide the dangers of their chemicals.

DuPont, for example, illegally withheld information about the health risks of its chemicals from the EPA, says a Bloomberg article from 2004 (<http://www.ewg.org/node/16471>). It's almost routine these days for corporations to lie about the dangers of the chemicals they produce.

To this day, DuPont insists PFOA and Teflon® are perfectly safe to cook on, but then, would you really expect anything different from a manufacturer?