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Neurotoxicity

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Source

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS). [Neurotoxicity Information Page](#).

Neurotoxicity occurs when the exposure to natural or manmade toxic substances (neurotoxicants) alters the normal activity of the nervous system. This can eventually disrupt or even kill neurons, key cells that transmit and process signals in the brain and other parts of the nervous system. Neurotoxicity can result from exposure to substances used in chemotherapy, radiation treatment, drug therapies, and organ transplants, as well as exposure to heavy metals such as lead and mercury, certain foods and food additives, pesticides, industrial and/or cleaning solvents, cosmetics, and some naturally occurring substances. Symptoms may appear immediately after exposure or be delayed. They may include limb weakness or numbness; loss of memory, vision, and/or intellect; headache; cognitive and behavioral problems; and sexual dysfunction. Individuals with certain disorders may be especially vulnerable to neurotoxicants.