

Can Kitchen Utensils Raise the Risk of Colon Cancer?

Microplastics have been shown to cause physiological changes in the gut that can increase the risk of colorectal cancer.

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As the year draws to an end, people often make resolutions related to their money, health, spirituality, and overall personal development for the upcoming year. However, the kitchen is a crucial area that one might want to consider when making New Year resolutions. Yes, you read correctly—the kitchen. Research has indicated that cookware may increase the risk of colorectal cancer (CRC).

Microplastics Increase the Risk of CRC

Microplastics (which result from the breakdown of plastics), for example, have been shown to [cause physiological changes](#) in the gut that can increase the risk of CRC, especially in those under 50. Several research studies have shown that microplastics can reduce the thickness of the mucus lining in our intestine, thereby reducing its barrier function. This could increase access of pathogenic bacteria and toxins to the inner layer of the colonic mucus, potentially increasing the risk of CRC. Interestingly, the authors point out an association between the time when plastic use infiltrated our daily lives, and the risk of CRC.

In the U.S., adults [have been estimated](#) to ingest between 39,000 and 52,000 particles of microplastics annually, and an additional 90,000 particles if they drink bottled water.

While plastics are biochemically inert, plasticizers used in their processing may be the source of the biological impact. Their resilience and stability has led to the environmental accumulation of plastics across our planet and they are now a part of the human food chain.

Risk from Non-stick Coatings on Pots and Pans

Another study has [found an association](#) between CRC risk and a chemical called perfluorooctanoate (PFOA). What is PFOA, you ask? Informally called a “forever chemical”, PFOAs were—and maybe continue to be—used in certain cookware, particularly non-stick pots. Safe cookware includes titanium, enamel iron cast, clay, glassware, and non-stick pots with the word

“no PFOA” indicated on them. Aluminum cookware, however, is just as unsafe as non-stick pots containing PFOA.

These studies confirm some of the health risks associated with our daily exposure to certain environmental factors.

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