

Electro awareness

What is your electromagnetic field quotient?

Milt Bowling

In my role as a consultant, I'm often asked to explain what electromagnetic fields are and why we should care about them. Dry stuff, you say? Well, you might be interested in how these can substantially affect your health.

Electric fields

When you plug your lamp into the wall outlet, you create an electric field along the wire and in the surrounding air—without having turned on the light. The higher the voltage, the stronger the electric field is.

Magnetic fields

Turn on your lamp, and the electricity begins to flow, creating a magnetic field which exists in the room environment with the electric field. The greater the current, the stronger the magnetic field is.

Electromagnetic fields

As frequencies increase, the electric and magnetic fields couple to form one. This is called an electromagnetic field or EMF. The magnetic field components of EMF are measured in Milligauss (mG) and can be

determined by using a sensor called a gaussmeter.

Electrical beings

Now that you know the terminology, let's look at the health effects. We are bioelectrical beings. Doctors, checking us for heart problems, send us for an

electrocardiogram. For concerns about our brain they send us for *electroencephalograms*. The electromagnetic pulse of the Earth (Schumann resonance) varies around eight hertz (Hz), the same as the human alpha brain wave. Life evolved with this natural rhythm of our planet.

Magnetic fields from household appliances

Appliance	Distance of 12 in (30.5 cm)	Distance of 24 in (61 cm)
Hair Dryer	Bg - 10	Bg - 70
Color TV	Bg - 8	Bg - 20
Dishwasher	2 - 7	6 - 30
Refrigerator	Bg - 10	Bg - 20
Can Opener	3 - 30	40 - 300
Microwave Oven	1 - 30	1 - 200
Washing Machine	Bg - 6	1 - 30
Computer Monitor	1 - 3	2 - 6

Measurements in milligauss;

Bg = Measurement indistinguishable from background levels
Source: EMFRAPID Program June 2002

Reported symptoms of electrosensitivity

- poor short-term memory, difficulty concentrating, and problem-solving
- insomnia/fatigue
- headaches
- dizziness
- skin rashes
- depression/anxiety
- irritability/frustration
- tinnitus
- chest pressure, rapid heart rate

Man-made frequencies are another matter. They can interfere with the body's natural rhythms. Whether caused by a genetic predisposition, a toxic accumulation, or both, some of us are more sensitive to EMFs than others. Electrosensitivity (ES) has been recognized by the World Health Organization and by countries like Sweden, where it is classified as a handicap or disability.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC 2002), a subset of the World Health Organization, classifies EMF as a Group 2B carcinogen ("possibly carcinogenic") based on "consistent statistical associations of high-level residential magnetic fields with a doubling of the risk of childhood leukemia."

The California Department of Health Services (CADHS,

2002) concluded that "EMFs can cause some degree of increased risk of childhood leukemia, adult brain cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease, and miscarriage."

Mitigating electrosensitivity

ES sufferers find that their symptoms increase when around appliances or electronics, and diminish when they are away from them. As EMFs decrease exponentially with distance, we can reduce our risks by moving a clock radio away from our bedside, unplugging an electric blanket after our bed is warmed, sitting back further from our computer, and using the back burner instead of the front on an electric stove.

Canadian health authorities continue to deny that adverse health effects can be caused by EMFs. For more information about this important issue and how you can affect change in government attitudes, contact me at cleanenergycanada.com. **a**

Milt Bowling, public speaker, consultant, author, and advocate, is President of Clean Energy Foundation.
cleanenergycanada.com.