



Health @ AsiaOne

Men's Health June 2009: Hanging mobile

Sending an SMS is less harmful to your health than calling. Minimise the health risks caused by your favourite gadget.

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By Mirza Malik

Convenience comes at a price: "The cells in the body react to electromagnetic fields in mobile phones just like they do to other environmental toxins, including heavy metals and chemicals," says Martin Blank, PhD, a professor in bioelectromagnetics at Columbia University.

As a result of this, you are at an increased risk of infertility, hearing problems and even sleepless nights. Find out how to beat the odds.

Future Dads, Beware

Using a mobile phone may harm your sperm, report Cleveland Clinic scientists. They found that men who talked on their mobiles for two hours a day shot 31 per cent fewer swimmers.

Keep it out of your pocket. As long as your mobile phone is turned on, it emits radiation that enables it to communicate with base stations, according to Lou Bloomfield, PhD, professor of physics at the University of Virginia and author of *How Everything Works: Making Physics Out of the Ordinary*. "The radiation emitted, however, is stronger and more frequent when you're talking or messaging."

Hot Stuff

Mobile phone users are twice as likely to develop malignant brain tumours called gliomas, according to a study that analysed the effects of mobile phone use of over 10 years or more published in the journal *Occupational*

Environmental Medicine

The further you are from a base station, the more radiation your phone must emit to get a signal, which causes your phone to heat up when you have low reception. So reduce your exposure - make calls only when you have a strong signal, hang up before your phone heats up and store your phone away from your body when it's not in use.

Hear You Go

Having trouble hearing the guy on the other side? Don't be quick to blame your mobile service provider, because it's probably your mobile harming your hearing, Indian researchers say. In a study of 100 cell users, the scientists found that four years of heavy usage (an hour a day) diminished the users' ability to hear high frequencies, making it hard for them to distinguish between certain sounds.

Always use a headset. "The electromagnetic waves emitted by handsets can affect your inner-ear mechanics over time," says Dr Naresh Panda, the study's lead author. Using a headset moves your mobile away from your ear.

Text It Up

Good news: exposure to radiation from your mobile phone diminishes slowly for the first six to eight centimetres from your body, and then it falls dramatically, says Bloomfield.

Sending an SMS is actually a safer way to communicate, says David O. Carpenter, MD, director of the Institute for Health and the Environment at the University at Albany. When you key in an SMS, you hold your phone away from your body. This exposes you to less radiation than when you have the mobile to your ear.

Sleep Stakes

The longer you hold a mobile phone to your ear, the worse you'll sleep, say scientists from Wayne State University. (They found that three hours of exposure to mobile signals significantly cuts the time you later spend in deep sleep.) Guard your grey matter using a Bluetooth headset - it emits only a minuscule amount of electromagnetic energy.

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Mirza Malik is the Associate Editor with Men's Health magazine by SPH Magazines.

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