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Fight the power of your powergrids

By **THANE BURNETT**

Federal officials say sleep tight.

But Marcel Wolfe no longer trusts the clock radio in his spare bedroom. The phone in the kitchen. Or those national health experts.

The 51-year-old Toronto holistic practitioner knows how to purify his water and the air he breathes. Every day he ingests 40 to 60 enzymes, just to help clean his body out.

But he — along with his 41-year-old publisher wife, Paula Wood — and a growing chorus of other people believe they are at risk from an invisible web of destructive power — that their bodies are being bombarded and manipulated by their homes' electrical grids.

"I can feel it in my body, when it's being influenced by energy — at times it's like there's just too much electricity inside me," says Wood, who wonders if her sleeplessness may be caused by excess power spilling into her rooms.

New kind of smog

From emissions from their cordless phones to the waves of energy being spit out by the fluorescent bulb over their kitchen sink, Wolfe and Wood feel sickened by a new kind of smog. Which is why they've called in Kevin Byrne (emfsolutions.ca) — a house cleaner who finds ways to get rid of, among other things, "dirty energy."

Byrne, a 48-year-old, one-time computer technical writer, now makes a living by testing the different electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields criss-crossing homes and offices.

As much as those who opposed smoking decades ago, or the people who first rang the alarm bell on lead-based paints, Byrne believes he is among the first missionaries to go forth and preach against the evils causing a controversial affliction called "electrical hypersensitivity."

Some Swedish estimates say about 3% of the population is sick from the power surges around us.

They include Norway's former prime minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who demands cellphones be kept far away from her.

Those who believe wayward electromagnetic fields — from old devices and new technology, including wireless hot spots — are spiking through our bodies see the results in rashes, dizziness, tiredness and a lack of concentration.

"We all live in a contaminated environment — you just have to be told it's there," Byrne says, as he walks around Wolfe and Wood's bungalow with five different scanners to measure power in their atmosphere, including radio frequencies that piggyback the wiring in most homes.

As Byrne nears a TV — that is turned off — lights on his gauges turn from green to red. They do the same around the couple's clock radio and a nearby dimmer switch — two of the worst offenders for letting energy escape, claims Byrne.

But the couple is most concerned about an expensive hands-free phone, that Byrne says is under a warning from the German Federal Agency for Radiation Protection.

Before the cleaning is finished, it'll be tossed out.

Shielded cable

These energy exorcisms cost between \$250-\$300, but are only the start.

Clients usually go on to invest in shielded cable to place on appliances and devices like lamps, and may spend \$1,000 more on special capacitors that claim to act as energy reservoirs.

Both Canadian health officials and the World Health Organization (WHO) don't believe this is money well spent.

"There have been no adverse consequences established from exposure to (radiation and electromagnetic fields) at levels below international guidelines on exposure," WHO officials concluded in a statement issued last year.

Their Health Canada counterparts (hc-sc.gc.ca) say they agree there are no "current concerns," based on "the bulk of evidence."

But they say a possible link to adverse health effects, such as cancer, continues to be a priority.

"We do take this seriously and we investigate all possible health effects," says Renee-France Bergeron, a Health Canada spokesman. "We do follow the latest studies."

Despite their best evidence, 65-year-old Toronto criminal lawyer Noel Turk has now reached a different verdict.

About two years ago, he was diagnosed with leukemia. Even with treatment and changes in lifestyle, it wasn't until last spring — when he began to clean his environment of excess energy — that he noticed a marked improvement.

He tossed out the electric blanket he's slept under for years, and even his metal supported bed. He replaced all fluorescent lights in his condo and got rid of his tube television. His cancer is stable but chronic "and has a mind of its own."

He believes by shielding himself from dirty energy, he has given his body a fighting chance.

"For me, it was a matter of life and death," he explains.

"People say, 'The government will protect me (from such things).' I just look at them with my jaw open."

Unless, of course, you live in the Republic of Kazakhstan — the much maligned Central Asian country that is the stomping ground of 'Borat', British comic Sacha Baron Cohen's most infamous character.

In that country, if you complain to your doctor that you are feeling ill because of dirty electricity in your home, a government inspector will check it out.

"And we think they're behind the times," muses Turk.

'Things will change'

Now is the time to catch up, says Wolfe, as red lights on Byrne's monitors direct them to an aging wire running from the couple's side door to the street's high powerlines.

"Within five years, things will change," Wolfe adds, sure that people will soon be looking at their cordless phones and clock radios as good reasons to stay awake at night.