



# Chasing Molecules: Poisonous Products, Human Health, and the Promise of Green Chemistry

*Elizabeth Grossman*

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Each day, headlines warn that baby bottles are leaching dangerous chemicals, nonstick pans are causing infertility, and plastic containers are making us fat. What if green chemistry could change all that? What if rather than toxics, our economy ran on harmless, environmentally-friendly materials?

Elizabeth Grossman, an acclaimed journalist who brought national attention to the contaminants hidden in computers and other high tech electronics, now tackles the hazards of ordinary consumer products. She shows that for the sake of convenience, efficiency, and short-term safety, we have created synthetic chemicals that fundamentally change, at a molecular level, the way our bodies work. The consequences range from diabetes to cancer, reproductive and neurological disorders.

Yet it's hard to imagine life without the creature comforts current materials provide—and Grossman argues we do not have to. A scientific revolution is introducing products that are “benign by design,” developing manufacturing processes that consider health impacts at every stage, and is creating new compounds that mimic rather than disrupt natural systems. Through interviews with leading researchers, Grossman gives us a first look at this radical transformation.

Green chemistry is just getting underway, but it offers hope that we can indeed create products that benefit health, the environment, and industry.

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