

Review of

A Small Dose of Toxicology. The Health Effects of Common Chemicals
By: Steven G. Gilbert. CRC Press. ISBN 0-415-31168-3. 266 pp.

The purpose of this book is aptly captured in its title – it exposes the reader to “a small dose” of science of toxicology. The book is an excellent introductory read for several different audiences: someone who is interested in a career in toxicology, a student new to the field, or the layman who is interested in understanding more about the harmful effects of everyday chemicals on the human body. The book outlines the social history of toxicology, and its importance in today’s world, and then delves into the basic fundamentals of the science, such as dose-response, idiosyncratic toxicology, risk management, and ADME, which provide a framework for the reader to understand the subsequent chapters. The book does a great job of outlining several areas of toxicology and its impact on human health, i.e. alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, pesticides, metals, solvents, radiation, natural toxins, the environment, cancer, development toxicology and neurotoxicology. The chapters are well written, with relevant examples of human exposure and subsequent consequence. A nice touch at the end of each chapter is reference section with internet links to sites of interest.

I found this book to be a delightful text that reminded me of all the wonderful ways in which toxicology impacts our lives; things that we as practicing toxicologists sometimes forget! It is a great primer for young people considering a career in the field, but, importantly, is also an excellent text for introducing the topic to the general public, something that I feel has historically been lacking. The author should be commended for his efforts in compiling this text.

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