

Quiz: RI.7.8

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

“What’s For Breakfast?”

- 1 Ah, Sunday morning breakfast: what are we having today? Looks like an omelet with toast and some fried potatoes, a few sausage links, some fresh fruit, and a tall glass of milk. Wait, what’s this? Pesticides, trenbolone acetate, acrylamide, bisphenol A, and a few PCBs are also on the menu! If you are not interested in consuming any of these chemicals, which you did not order, read on:
- 2
 - Pesticides: You might think that you are making a healthy choice by eating fruit, but watch out! That fruit might still contain some pesticides—toxic chemicals applied during the growing period to keep away fruit-loving insects and other pests. Always wash your fruit thoroughly before eating, and if you can, peel it. Certain fruits absorb pesticides more readily than others, so be more careful around apples, grapes, nectarines, peaches, and strawberries. Fruits most resistant to pesticides are cantaloupes, grapefruits, kiwis, mangoes, papayas, and pineapples. You can also buy produce that was not grown using chemical pesticides.
- 3
 - Hormones and steroids: You may have heard of rBGH, which stands for recombinant bovine growth hormone, and rBST, which stands for recombinant bovine somatotropin. These are different names for a human-made chemical that people sometimes give to cattle. (“Recombinant” describes chemicals made by combining different materials in a laboratory.) The hormone causes cows to grow larger and produce more milk. Similar effects can be gained from implanting in cows substances like trenbolone acetate (TBA), a powerful steroid that some people voluntarily use to build their muscles. These hormones and steroids are absorbed into the cow’s meat and milk, so you might be consuming rBST or TBA without wanting to.
- 4
 - Acrylamide: This chemical forms in foods that have been heated at high temperatures. It is more common in grains—for example, burned toast—and starchy foods such as potato chips and fries. Many scientists consider acrylamide to be a likely carcinogen, or cancer-causing substance, though more research is necessary to confirm this. In the meantime, you can lessen the risk of consuming acrylamide by eating fewer fried foods: next time you want potatoes, consider steaming or boiling them. You can also remove your bread from the toaster when it is light brown rather than dark.
- 5
 - Bisphenol A (BPA): To find this chemical, look at your plate—not at the food, but at the plate itself! Some plastic plates and cups contain BPA. The BPA can leach from the plastic into your food or drink. BPA can cause your body not to notice when you have had enough to eat and are “full.” Without that natural signal, you might be tempted to overeat. Overeating can lead to obesity and related diseases such as diabetes and gout. When purchasing plastic, look carefully for the BPA-free label.
- 6
 - Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs): PCBs make up a large group of chemicals that people once used to make a variety of products, including electrical equipment, motor oil, and insulation. They are persistent organic pollutants, which means they are highly toxic and can remain in the environment for long periods without breaking down. As a result, in 1979 the United States banned the use of PCBs. Because they are persistent, however, these potent and dangerous chemicals can still be found in many places today.



- 7 PCBs can even find their way into your food. This usually happens when an animal eats smaller creatures that have absorbed PCBs from their environment. The larger animal then absorbs the PCBs in its food. If you eat animals that contain PCBs, you absorb the chemicals as well. Certain kinds of fish—including catfish and carp—are particularly likely to contain PCBs. The U.S. government identifies sites that have been contaminated by PCBs, so you can decrease your risk by learning where your food comes from. Dust containing PCBs can also settle on fruits and vegetables, which is another reason why it's important to wash these foods thoroughly before eating them.
- 8 What can PCBs do? Direct exposure to these chemicals can irritate a person's eyes, skin, and lungs. Studies suggest that as PCBs build up in a person's body, they can damage many different organs and systems. Studies have also linked PCBs to cancer.
- 9 How nervous should you be about consuming a breakfast like this? Actually, you do not need to be that nervous. Even if these chemicals are present in your foods, you are probably eating only a minuscule amount, nowhere near enough to do permanent damage. However, over time, these chemicals can build up in your system and possibly cause cancer, nerve damage, obesity, and other diseases.
- 10 There are several ways to avoid eating chemicals you don't want to consume. First of all, read labels carefully. Ensure that the foods you eat do not contain any preservatives or other added chemicals. Also, get your food from local vendors when you can. People who live near you do not have to add many chemicals because the food does not have to keep for long periods of time or travel long distances. Wash fruit and vegetables well to remove any PCBs or pesticides. Steam or boil vegetables instead of frying them, and try not to brown, darken, or burn your food. Finally, consider looking for labels that say BPA-free or rBST-free. This can help you decrease your risk for consuming chemicals you do not want.
1. Which claim in the text is **mostly supported** by opinion?
- A. Animals treated with hormones pass along the hormones into food we eat.
 - B. It is easy to avoid these foods if you pay attention to details.
 - C. Eating darkened toast and fried foods can be bad for you.
 - D. Some chemicals can be present in the plastics that hold your food.
2. Which claim is **best** supported by the evidence in paragraph 5?
- A. Food should never be placed on a plastic plate.
 - B. BPA is one of the most dangerous chemicals found in food.
 - C. Exposure to BPA causes people to develop diabetes and gout.
 - D. Food can absorb harmful chemicals even after it has been grown and prepared.

