

Cell Phone Guidelines

Studies disagree as to whether there is a causal link between cell phone use and damage to brain or other human tissue. When the longest-running study was started 10 years ago, the “heavy user” category of cell phone user, where correlation with health risk was most



perceived, was 30 minutes per day, which is now the *average* use in the United States. Only one very limited health study has reviewed long-term effects of cell phone use on children, whose skulls are less thick than adult skulls. That study found a much greater risk for children.



In May 2011 the World Health Organization listed cell phones in the same “possibly carcinogenic” category as certain pesticides, coffee, lead and engine exhaust. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) mandates that all cell phone manuals caution users to hold the phone a short distance (.6 inch to 1 inch) from the body. (See your manual’s fine print.)

While scientists continue to research and debate this matter, here are some simple things you can do to minimize your exposure to cell phone emissions:

1. Anything that puts distance between the cell phone and your body, such as texting or using a hands-free headset or speaker mode, *significantly* reduces cell phone radiation on your body. When using a hands-free headset, the cell phone should not be next to your body.
2. Carry cell phones in a holster or purse as opposed to very close to the body.
3. Avoid using cell phones in areas with weak signals, such as elevators, buildings and poor cell quality areas, where they emit more radiation while trying to connect to cellular towers.
4. Never text while driving, and keep even hands-free calls to a minimum in the car. Multiple studies show that using a phone while driving is akin to driving drunk.
5. Limit cell phone use, particularly by children.
6. If you wish, you can ask cell phone retailers or search the Internet for information on each phone’s “Specific Absorption Rate,” which is one FCC-mandated measure of how much radiation is emitted by each phone.

This document was prepared by the Burlingame City Council, based on input from industry and various scientific sources, in August 2011. It is designed to provide general information concerning cell phone use; it is not intended as a scientific treatise or as medical advice. Interested persons are encouraged to inform themselves about all aspects of this matter. For additional information, you may go to www.fcc.gov, www.ctia, www.ewg.org and other Internet sites.