Colborn, Theo American Environmentalist, Coauthor of Our Stolen Future (1927-) Encyclopedia Article

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Dr. Theo Colborn focused international attention on the dangers of endocrine disrupters, chemicals that alter or block **endocrine** functions. With Dianne Dumanoski and John P. Myers, she authored *Our Stolen Future,* published in 1996. This seminal work synthesizes scientific evidence, gleaned from Colborn's seven years of research review, on the dangers of hormone-disrupting chemicals.

Small amounts of these chemicals are especially dangerous for fetuses and infants because hormones control all aspects of development such as organ and physiological system development, sexuality and reproductivity, learning and behavior. *Our Stolen Future* led to congressional legislation aimed at protecting children from such exposure. It also motivated much scientific research on potential hormone-disrupting chemicals, such as phthalates, bisphenol-A, and numerous fire retardants.

Colborn was born in Plainfield, New Jersey in March 1927. She raised four children while working as a pharmacist but became increasingly interested in environmental issues. At age 51, she enrolled as a graduate student in ecology, studying stone flies and mayflies as indicators of stream health. She received a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Wisconsin in Madison in 1985. Her first job, as a congressional fellow at the Office of Technology Assessment in Washington, involved working on studies related to air pollution and water purification. She joined the Conservation Foundation, a nonprofit think tank in 1987. Her job there, scientifically assessing the health of the Great Lakes, resulted in *Our Stolen Future.* Colborn is a senior scientist with the World Wildlife Fund and travels widely, speaking about the dangers of prenatal exposure to chemicals that interfere with hormonal systems.

Bibliography

Dumanoski, Dianne; Myers, John P.; and Colborn, Theo P. (1997). *Our Stolen Future.* New York: Penguin.