



# YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2008 Volume VII: Urban Environmental Quality and Human Health: Conceiving a Sustainable Future

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## **Eat, Drink, and Be Wary: Recognizing Toxic Chemicals in Foods and Beverages**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 08.07.02, published September 2008

by Ram Bhagat

Eat, Drink, and Be Wary is an inquiry-based unit designed to connect high school Chemistry students to relevant environmental issues. The primary purpose of this unit is to explore the effects and potential dangers of plastic packages on environmental and human health. My overall goals are to motivate urban minority youth to develop creative problem-solving skills and enhance their social and emotional intelligence through the performing arts, particularly drumming.

Yet, the underlying goal of the unit is to stimulate youth activism. To engage my students in this experiential unit, I will focus on an array of plastic packages used for various foods, beverages, and cosmetics that American teenagers consume. In order to build the momentum of my students, towards involvement in social change, I will integrate this unit into three sections of the course (atomic structure, nomenclature, and molar relationships).

During the final stage of this educational process, I will guide the students in the production of an Eco Arts and Science Project that demonstrates the knowledge and insight gained throughout the semester. Ultimately, I want to inspire my students to formulate a viable set of solutions to the mounting problems associated with single-use plastic H<sub>2</sub>O bottles.

(Developed for Chemistry, grades 10-12; recommended for Chemistry and Environmental Science, grades 10-12, and Human Anatomy, grades 11-12)

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