

About Electric Blankets

When you sleep under an electric blanket, you are exposed to a low-level electromagnetic field (EMF) created by the electricity moving through the wires embedded in the blanket. Exposure to low-level EMFs has been linked to childhood leukemia, lymphoma, and other health problems. Although we do not yet understand exactly how EMF exposure leads to cancer, we know that EMFs can damage and change the expression of genes.

One good resource to learn more about the effects of EMF exposure (which we also experience from cell phones, power lines, and other source) is the 2007 [BioInitiative Report](http://www.bioinitiative.org/report/index.htm) (<http://www.bioinitiative.org/report/index.htm>), which was prepared by an international collaboration of scientists and public health professionals.

Electric blankets and cell phones are of particular concern because both are used close to the body, so the exposure is much higher than from a source at a greater distance. In addition, the typical exposure to an electric blanket lasts several hours while sleeping. A report published in the European Journal of Cancer Prevention in 2007 found that using electric blankets was associated with a 15 percent higher prevalence of endometrial cancer, or 36 percent higher for those using electric blankets for 20 year or more (http://journals.lww.com/eurjcancerprev/Abstract/2007/06000/Use_of_electric_blankets_and_association_with.11.aspx.) Studies indicate that women who used an electric blanket around the time of conception and during early pregnancy were nearly twice as likely to miscarry than women who did not (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/37026110>).

For these reasons, I recommend not using electric blankets. However, if using one is unavoidable, the only safe way to use it is to use it to turn in on to warm your bed before you get in and then turn it off and unplug it before getting into bed, to completely eliminate EMF exposure.

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