

## After cancer warnings on mobiles, could your home phone be putting your health in danger ?

By Tessa THOMAS

Like many of us, David Dean enjoyed the freedom a digital cordless phone gave him to walk about the house while on calls. Then the 44-year-old company director from Wimbledon started getting headaches - when he stopped using his cordless phone the headaches went overnight.

There has been much controversy over health problems linked to mobile phones and masts.

Only this week, a new report - based on research revealed in the Mail last year - claimed that people who use a mobile phone for hours a day are 50 per cent more likely to develop mouth cancer.

But some experts believe that digital wireless phones - used in millions of homes - could be just as problematic.

These phones operate using the same technology as wi-fi computer systems and mobile phones - with the base station acting like a miniature mobile phone mast.

A recent survey by the Dutch Electrohypersensitivity Foundation has found that digitally enhanced cordless telephones - Dects - are the main source of radiation in homes that have them.



Could cordless phones cause headaches, fatigue and worse?

The researchers claimed that they frequently cause headaches, fatigue, heart palpitations and concentration and sleep problems.

According to cancer specialist Professor Lennart Hardell from the University Hospital, in Orebro, Sweden: "The risks are the same as for mobiles, but they haven't been studied because researchers thought the Dect operated like a landline."

One of the few scientists to have included cordless phones in his studies, Professor Hardell's research suggests that habitual users have a three-fold risk of acoustic neuroma (a benign tumour between the ear and brain) and a four-fold risk of a malignant brain tumour.

But other experts dispute his findings.

A Dect phone sits in a cradle on a base that charges it up between calls.

"Although people treat a Dect phone as if it's an ordinary landline, its base station constantly emits radiation, so the health risks are the same as for a regularly used mobile," says Professor Hardell.

It is not only their constant output that elevates these risks, he says. "They are usually in rooms where people spend a lot of time and people tend to spend longer on them than they do on a mobile."

According to Dr Andrew Goldsworthy, an honorary lecturer in biology at Imperial College London: "The effect is you have a double whammy, because the base station is powering up 24-hours-a-day and the handset is picking up and sending signals whenever it's held to the head."

The signal can travel through walls and ceilings, too.

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