This is the second of a series of three posts on toxic chemicals. On Monday, I discussed a recent paper that appraised the shortcomings of the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Today, I turn to a paper by David Adelman (University of Texas) proposing some reforms.

First, Adelman suggests that the U.S. follow the EU example and adopt a tiered system, in which most chemicals receive minimal screening before entering the market, while others receive much more serious scrutiny. The EU has pioneered this approach.

Second, he calls for post-marketing monitoring of health effects, including government studies and independent meta-reviews (which could include foreign studies as well.) I particularly like his suggestion of using biomonitoring as a trigger for greater scrutiny — if a chemical starts turning up in human tissues, we certainly should take a closer look at its possible health effects.

Third, he calls for much more public disclosure of data than is currently allowed. Too many manufacturers are allowed to label key information as trade secrets.

Fourth, he suggests integrating regulation with innovation policies to encourage the development of safer alternatives. The European REACH directive is very shrewd in shaping regulatory instruments to create incentives for manufacturers to find alternatives to classes of chemicals that are most likely to be hazardous.

These measures are designed to affect what chemicals are used. My final post in this series will consider what happens to the chemicals *after* they are used.