

Healthy Legacy

Healthy people,
a clean environment
and a thriving economy

Quick Tips to Avoid Toxins:

Reducing Exposure to Priority Chemicals¹ in Children's Products

The following chemicals appear on a list of priority chemicals that are found in children's products or common products that children could be exposed to.

1. Bisphenol A (BPA) is a chemical component of polycarbonate plastic (#7PC) and is prohibited from baby bottles and sippy cups sold in Minnesota, six other states and the City of Chicago. However, it's still used in food and formula can linings, and thermal credit card receipts. BPA disrupts hormones in the human body and low-dose early life exposures are linked with reproductive and developmental problems, cancer and diabetes.

Tips to reduce exposure:

- Serve fresh or frozen foods to avoid exposure through can linings. (Most Eden foods use BPA-free can linings and Muir Glenn canned tomatoes are in the process of transitioning to BPA-free lining.)
- Don't let children handle credit card receipts. If you handle them, wash your hands (with soap and water; hand sanitizer won't eliminate BPA) before contact with children. BPA in receipts can be absorbed through the skin.
- Discard old polycarbonate water bottles, baby bottles and sippy cups. Use those labeled "BPA free."
- If you use canned infant formula, purchase the powdered form, which contains less BPA than the concentrated liquid formula.



2. Cadmium and lead are toxic heavy metals. Even low level exposures are linked to adverse effects on learning and brain development. Federal laws prohibit lead in children's toys. Several states, including Minnesota, prohibit lead and cadmium in children's jewelry.

Tips to reduce exposure:

- Avoid purchasing inexpensive children's jewelry. Discard older pieces.
- Avoid buying vinyl (PVC) products, like children's backpacks or clothing with vinyl embellishments, which often contain lead additives.
- Older vinyl mini-blinds may contain lead. Replace with blinds labeled "lead-free" or non-vinyl alternatives.
- Keep vinyl purses away from small children who could chew on them. Women's purses made of vinyl could contain lead and those in red, orange and yellow may contain cadmium.



Healthy Legacy promotes the production and use
of everyday products without toxic chemicals.

healthylegacy.org

3. Formaldehyde is commonly found in textiles, cleaning products, composite wood products and as a chemical byproduct in personal care products. Exposure is linked to cancer and respiratory problems.

Tips to reduce exposure:

- Wash new clothes and linens before wearing or using to reduce formaldehyde levels.
- When purchasing composite wood products, look for those made for outdoor use which use phenol-formaldehyde (PF), a lower emitting resin than those with urea-formaldehyde (UF).
- Avoid personal care products with Quaternium-15; it can release formaldehyde over time.
- Purchase cleaning products without formaldehyde or its variants:

Avoid: formalin, methanal, oxymethylene, urea, 1,3-Dioxetane, Quaternium 15, methylaldehyde, methylene oxide, formic aldehyde, oxomethane formalin or phenol formaldehyde.

4. Phthalates² are chemicals added to various products, including softeners in PVC plastic and fragrance-binders in personal care products. Phthalates disrupt hormones in the body and exposure is linked to reproductive and respiratory problems. Some phthalates are banned from children’s toys in the U.S.

Tips to reduce exposure:

- Avoid personal care and household products with “fragrance” on the label, they may contain phthalates (BBP or DBP).
- Search for fragrance-free and phthalate-free personal care products at cosmeticsdatabase.com
- Discard older soft vinyl baby toys which may contain phthalates.
- That new vinyl shower curtain smell is phthalates! Use shower curtains made of fabric or other alternatives to vinyl.



5. Brominated flame retardants³ are used in textiles and electronic enclosures. HBCD is also added to polystyrene foam and furniture. Both chemicals are released from these products and end up in household dust. Children are exposed through ingesting dust or through mouthing of textiles. Deca and HBCD adversely affect learning and development.

Tips to reduce exposure:

- Replace older TVs and CRT monitors which are likely to contain deca.
- Look for flame retarded products that are labeled “halogen free” and research if not labeled.
- Don’t let babies and toddlers mouth furniture or carpets.



¹The Minnesota Department of Health has named nine priority chemicals. These are chemicals that are already on a larger list of “chemicals of high concern” (CHCs). CHCs persist in the environment, build up in the human body and are toxic to humans and animals. Priority chemicals are CHCs that are produced at high volume, are used in children’s products and have been found in the human body, home or environment. More information: health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/toxfreekids/priority.html#chemicals

²The phthalates included on the “Priority Chemicals” list are:

- Butyl benzyl phthalate (BBP) 85-68-7
- Dibutyl phthalate (DBP) 84-74-2
- Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP) 117-81-7

³The brominated flame retardants on the “Priority Chemicals” list are:

- Decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE)
- Hexabromocyclododecane (HBCD)

Who is Healthy Legacy?

Healthy Legacy is a public health coalition representing over one million Minnesotans that are dedicated to safe products, made safely. Founded by the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and Clean Water Action, our coalition is comprised of 34 diverse organizations. We educate consumers, work with leading businesses and promote protective policies.

Visit healthylegacy.org for a complete list of our coalition partners.