

REDUCING YOUR CHILD'S EXPOSURE TO FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS

What are flame retardant chemicals and where are they found?

Flame retardant chemicals decrease the ability of materials to ignite. They may be present in plastic, textile and foam consumer products to which children may be exposed:

- Baby products (such as nursing pillows, car seats, crib mattresses, baby carriers, strollers, and changing pads);
- Upholstered furniture;
- Carpets and draperies; and
- Automotive interior textiles and plastics.

How are children exposed to flame retardant chemicals?

Flame retardant chemicals escape from products into the air and they can attach to dust. Dust is in the air we breathe and can also be transported via our hands and our food and into our mouths.

Children may be more vulnerable to chemicals in the environment because their bodies grow at a faster rate than adults. Children are more likely to be exposed to these chemicals because they crawl on the floor and put their fingers and these products into their mouths.



What do we know about flame retardant chemicals?

EPA is currently assessing flame retardant chemicals to determine if they pose concerns. These assessments include the review of a number of studies that indicate exposure to certain flame retardant chemicals may be associated with a range of health effects, including:

- Reduced IQ;
- Learning Disorders;
- Reduced Fertility;
- Thyroid Disruption; and
- Cancer.

If EPA's assessments conclude there are risks, EPA will take appropriate action to address those concerns.

What steps can parents take to reduce exposure?

Practical steps can reduce children's exposure to these chemicals. Follow these simple steps to lower your children's exposure to these chemicals.

- Wash your hands and your children's hands often, especially before eating.
- Dust frequently with a moist cloth.
- Wet mop or vacuum with a HEPA filter attachment often.
- Prevent small children from chewing on products that may contain these chemicals.
- Repair tears to upholstered furniture.
- Wipe and vacuum the interior of your car often as seats and dashboards contain flame retardant chemicals.

Many companies now offer furniture and other products without flame retardants. To find out if the products you own (or plan to purchase) contain flame retardant chemicals, contact the product manufacturer or check the tag on the product.



Several studies demonstrate that exposure is higher in children than adults. A number of states have regulations in place and other states, as well as the EPA, are considering options for regulating certain flame retardants to protect the public from further exposure. For more information about the EPA studies related to these chemicals, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/fact-sheet-assessing-risks-flme-retardants>. For information on the US Consumer Product Safety Commission's work on flame retardants, visit: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Research--Statistics/Chemicals/Flame-Retardants/>