



STOP TOXIC TOYS

Phthalates cause adverse health effects

Phthalates are chemicals added to polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic to make it soft and flexible. Among many other things, they are used in soft plastic toys and other baby products, like teething rings, bath books, and rubber ducks. Because phthalates are not chemically bonded to PVC molecules, phthalates are given off freely by PVC. Children have a natural tendency to suck on objects as a way of exploring the world around them, and phthalates can leach out of these products and enter their bodies.

Phthalates have been shown to adversely affect human health:

- Phthalates interfere with the natural functioning of the hormone system.
- Phthalates cause reproductive and genital defects.
- Exposure is linked to early onset of puberty and increased risk of later life breast cancer.
- Phthalates may lower sperm count and are associated with the risk factors for testicular cancer.

U.S. EPA studies show the cumulative impact of different phthalates leads to an exponential increase in associated harm. According to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), levels of phthalates found in humans are higher than levels shown to cause adverse health effects. The data also show phthalate levels are highest in children. CDC scientists concluded that “[f]rom a public health perspective, these data provide evidence that phthalate exposure is both higher and more common than previously suspected.”

Significant government action taken against phthalates

Phthalates have already been banned or restricted in over a dozen countries around the world including the entire European Union, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, and Sweden. In 2007, California became the first state in the nation to ban phthalates from children’s products. Eleven states have introduced legislation to ban phthalates from children’s toys and other products.

Safer alternatives exist and are in use

For many chemicals, including phthalates and lead, safer cost-effective alternatives exist such as PVC-free toys that are manufactured without these harmful additives. Safer alternatives to PVC baby / children’s products and toys include toys made out of biobased plastics, polyethylenes, polypropylenes, thermoplastic elastomers, and ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) that are free of these toxic additives

Toy companies and retailers are open to phasing out the manufacture or sale of toys with phthalates

A number of leading baby and children’s toys manufacturers such as Brio, Chicco, Evenflo, First Years, Gerber, International Playthings, Lamaze Infant Development, Lego Systems, Sassy, and Tiny Love have committed to phase out all PVC toys including and prioritizing those containing phthalates. Additionally, Wal-Mart and Toys-R-Us have stated that they will begin phasing out children’s toys containing phthalates in the coming months. Over ten years ago, Ikea phased out all PVC toys including those containing phthalates. Unfortunately, there are still many products on the market that contain phthalates because there is no federal law banning the use of these chemicals in children’s toys and child care articles.

Please include the Feinstein Amendment banning phthalates from children’s toys in the House/Senate Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act. This critical consumer protection and public health measure will prohibit the use of phthalates in toys and child care articles intended for use by children.

For more information, please contact the Breast Cancer Fund:

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