

WHAT'S IN THE BATH TUB?

TOXIC CHEMICALS AND CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS



Shampoo, diaper wipes, and lotion for babies. Flavored lip gloss, bubble bath, and sparkly nail polish for young girls. Children are exposed to an average of 61 personal care product ingredients each day according to a recent survey, and many of these chemicals have known health risks or have never been tested for safety.

Lead is in Lipstick Too

This summer, manufacturers recalled Thomas the Tank Engine and millions of other toys because of dangerous lead paint. But the problem for our kids is not just lead in toys from China. Researchers recently found lead in more than half of 33 red lipsticks tested and an industry survey estimates that 63% of seven to ten-year old girls wear lipstick. Most of the personal care products for children that contain fragrance also contain phthalates. Phthalates disrupt normal hormonal processes and cause reproductive problems. Many baby washes and shampoos contain 1,4-dioxane, a cancer-causing contaminant. Other common additives found in personal care products are linked to neurological damage.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic chemicals, which can disrupt their development and lead to lifelong health problems. A child's skin is thinner than an adult's and can absorb greater amounts of chemicals. A growing body of scientific evidence also suggests that exposures to toxic chemicals are contributing to the falling age of puberty in U.S. girls, which increases their risk of breast cancer.

No Government Oversight of Toxic Chemicals in Consumer Products

Why is it that in 2007 children's products containing toxic chemicals still make it to store shelves and into our homes? The frightening answer is that there is little federal or state government oversight on toxic chemicals in children's products.

A Sensible Solution To Make Personal Care Products and Other Products Safe For Kids

Parents should be able to buy baby lotions or bubble baths without fear of toxic ingredients that might harm their children. Fortunately, there is a sensible solution:

- Only the safest chemicals and materials should be allowed in personal care and other children's products.
- Manufacturers must be required to test and disclose the chemical contents of children's products.
- Technical assistance should be available to help businesses make safer products for kids.

After the passage of landmark legislation to protect our kids from toxic flame retardants, the time is right for Washington State to make kid's products safe for kids!

Nobody Minding the Bath Tub or the Beauty Cabinet

The federal government has been slow to act to protect infants and children from toxic chemicals in baby shampoos, baby lotions, “tween” make-up, and other personal care products. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is tasked with oversight of the cosmetics industry, including body products for babies, but contrary to popular belief, the FDA does not regulate personal care products the same as they do medications. For example:

- The FDA does not review what goes into personal care products before they are marketed and cannot compel companies to provide health information about their ingredients. A 2007 national analysis found that 77% of ingredients in 1,700 children’s personal care products had not been assessed for safety.
- The FDA does not have the authority to ensure that personal care products are safe. The FDA has no legal authority to test personal care products and recalls are voluntary.
- Labeling loopholes for personal care products allow many potentially harmful ingredients, such as phthalates, to hide on the label under the phrase “fragrance”, so consumers can’t make informed choices. Manufacturers are also not required to substantiate label claims like “gentle”, “safe”, and “natural”.



States Are Taking Action Now

Fortunately, states are taking action where the federal government has failed to protect children from harmful chemicals in everyday consumer products. California, New York and Michigan have stepped up to regulate jewelry and other products by limiting lead content. California has passed a law to prohibit phthalates in toys and baby products. Many other states are considering laws to regulate chemicals in products, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Minnesota.

Washington State Should Not Wait To Act

Washington State cannot and should not wait for the federal government to act. While there are thousands of toxic chemicals on the market and many are in products our children put on their skin or hair, sleep on, put in their mouths, play with, and wear every day, there is no system to ensure that these products are safe. The same chemicals in these products end up as a waste problem in landfills and incinerators, and a contamination problem in Puget Sound, the Columbia River and other waterbodies. These toxic chemicals degrade invertebrate populations and also build up in the food chain, ultimately impacting orcas and birds.

The Washington State Legislature must take action now to protect children from toxic chemicals in personal care products and other products by passing the Children’s Safe Products Act which will:

- Prohibit the use of dangerous chemicals, such as lead, cadmium, and phthalates, in children’s products.
- Provide consumers with useful information to make safer buying choices. Manufacturers of children’s products should be required to test and disclose the chemical contents of their products.
- Put Washington on track to addressing the many other hazardous chemicals in children’s products.

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