

Put Out Flame Retardants, Ignite Health!

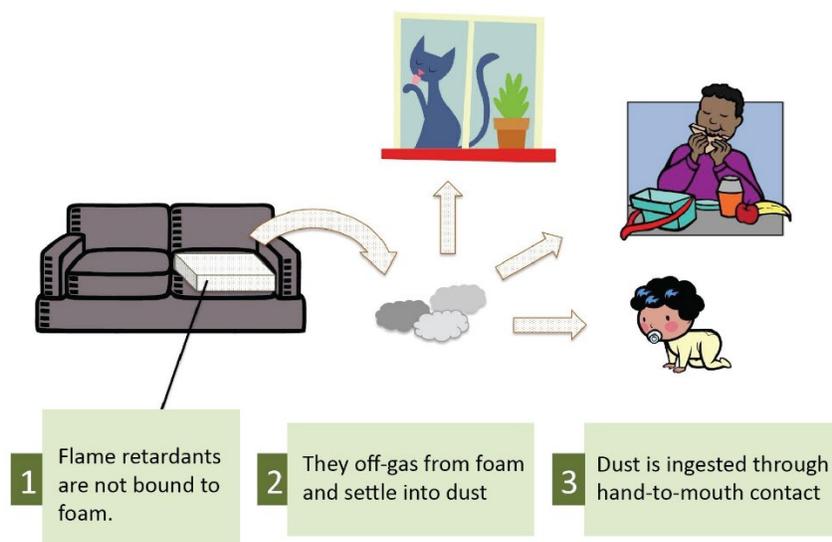
What are flame retardants? Flame retardants are chemicals added to furniture, electronics and building insulation to slow the spread of fires. There are hundreds of flame retardants that contain a variety of chemicals, including bromine, chlorine, and phosphorus. Flame retardants can be harmful, especially for children or people who are exposed to them at work, like firefighters.

Where are flame retardants found?

Flame retardants may be found in:

- Home and office furniture
- Baby products such as high-chairs, nursing pillows, changing-table pads, crib mattresses, baby carriers and nap mats
- Carpets and carpet padding
- Automobile and airplane seats
- Kitchen appliances
- Electronics such as computers, cell phones, TVs and remote controls
- Building insulation
- Wire and cable

Flame retardants can escape from these foam and plastic products and enter the settled dust and air in our homes. From there they can be inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. Children are more exposed to these chemicals because they play on or close to the floor and place hands and objects in their mouths. Flame retardants can also be found in our food and water, especially in fatty fish, meat, and, dairy products and even in some plant-based foods!



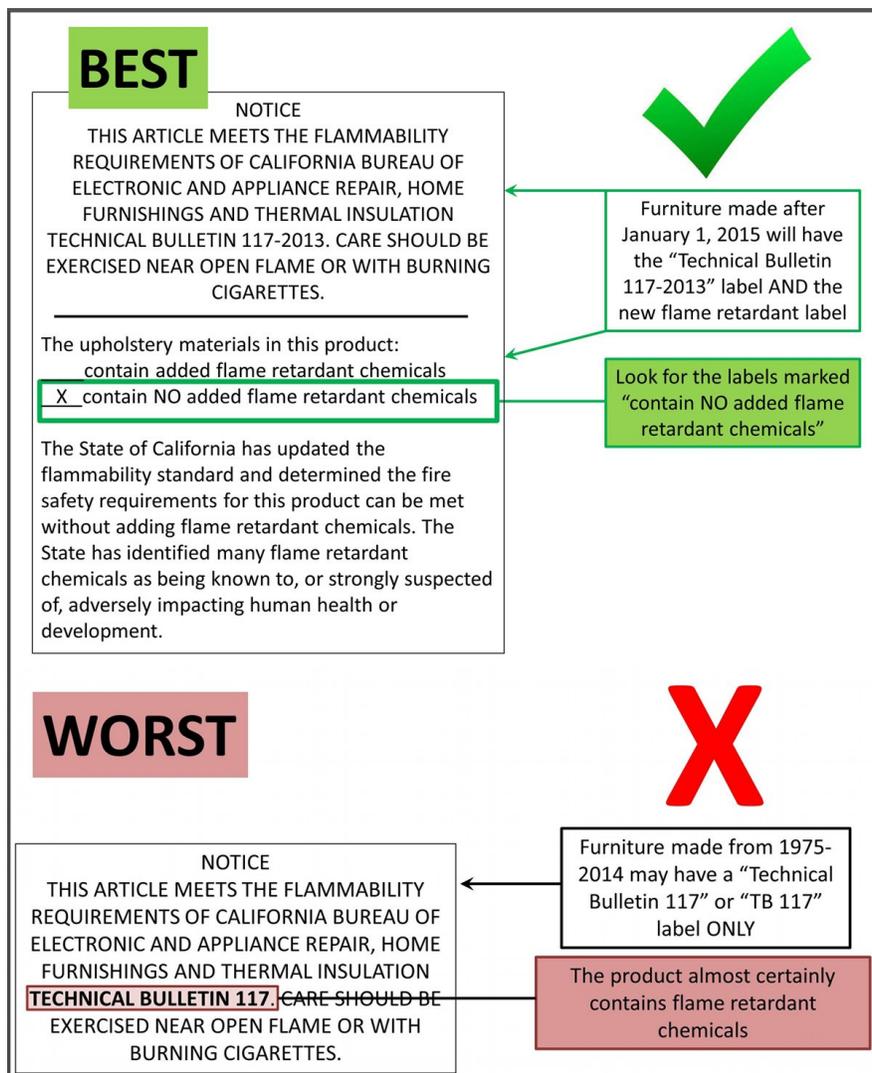
What do flame retardants do to our health?

Flame retardants cross the placenta and enter the fetus. Flame retardants can hang around in human tissues for many months or even years! Flame retardants have been linked to cancer, hormone disruption, and problems with motor skills, attention, and IQ in children.

How can we avoid flame retardants?

- Remove dust from surfaces with a moist microfiber cloth (including inside your car).
- Vacuum frequently with a vacuum cleaner that has a **HEPA** filter and wet-mop floors with a microfiber mop.
- Wash children's hands often, especially before meals. Wash your own hands after handling dryer lint or keyboards.
- Repair or replace furniture with crumbling or exposed foam.
- Avoid foam carpet padding.
- Eat less fatty meat and dairy products.

Check furniture labels for the presence of flame retardants by looking for labels below.



Resources

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences: [Flame Retardants](#)

Green Science Policy Institute: [Flame Retardants](#)

Environmental Working Group:

[Flame Retardants: Why They're in Our Homes and How to Avoid Them](#)

[Advice for Parents: Find Nap Mats Without Flame Retardant Chemicals](#)

Toxic Free Future: [Top Tips for Avoiding Toxic Flame Retardants at Home](#)

Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSUs): [PBDEs: Information for Pediatric Health Professionals](#)

References:

“Advice for Parents: Find Nap Mats Without Flame Retardant Chemicals” Tasha Stoiber Ph.D., Senior Scientist. *EWG's Children's Health Initiative*. Accessed June 21, 2019.

“Flame Retardants” *EWG's Children's Health Initiative*. Ewg.org/Flame-retardants. Accessed June 21, 2019.

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“Flame Retardants: Why They're in Our Homes and How To Avoid Them” Johanna Congleton. *EWG's Children's Health Initiative*. Accessed June 21, 2019.

“[PBDEs: Information for Pediatric Health Professionals](#)” PEHSU. Accessed June 21, 2019.

“Top Tips for Avoiding Toxic Flame Retardants at Home” Toxic Free Future. <https://toxicfreefuture.org/top-tips-avoiding-toxic-flame-retardants-home/>. Accessed July 7, 2019.