

# Chemicals in the daily **life of children**



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# Chemicals in the daily life of children

Being a parent brings you lots of joy. But it also means you have constant responsibility and often worry. Modern society is complicated, and it's not easy for a parent to keep track of all the dangers and foresee all the risks.

Materials and products contain various chemicals. This brochure uses the term chemicals to mean chemical substances and mixtures of substances. Not all substances and mixtures are dangerous, but this brochure deals with those substances and mixtures that can present a risk to your health or the environment.

Some chemical additives give materials and goods certain properties, such as colour, softness and fire resistance. The companies that manufacture and sell these products on the market are responsible for the chemicals they contain and for the risks these may cause.

As a parent and consumer, you can affect your child's exposure to chemicals. We have prepared this brochure to inform you of the risks that exist, so that you can take steps to avoid them. In that way, you can hopefully also avoid unnecessary worry, and get more enjoyment out of being a parent.

## WHAT IS DANGEROUS?

Chemicals can be dangerous in different ways. They can be *acutely toxic*, which means that they can cause immediate injury. The more acutely toxic they are, the less is needed to cause injury.

They can also be dangerous by being *long-lasting*. This means that they are difficult to break down in your body or the environment. If a substance is constantly present in the local environment, the concentration of the substance in your body will increase, and can continue to cause long-lasting injuries.

There are also chemicals that are neither especially toxic nor long-lasting, but nevertheless can result in harm. Allergens are an example of these.

Chemicals can sometimes interact and cause a greater effect to-



gether than they would separately. This is often called a *combination effect* or *cocktail effect*. An example of this is how certain phthalates used in plastic to increase softness and pliability can combine to affect fertility. You can read more about phthalates in the section, *Plastic toys* on page 13.

### **IS IT MORE DANGEROUS FOR CHILDREN?**

Because their bodies are not yet fully developed, children can be more sensitive to chemicals than adults. This is especially true in the case of organ systems that develop after birth, such as the immune system and the brain. The brain is particularly vulnerable as the protective systems that adults have are not fully developed in children.

In addition, children explore their surroundings by tasting and sucking on things. They have unlimited curiosity but cannot distinguish between dangerous and safe objects.

Children also have sensitive skin. They breathe more rapidly and eat and drink more in relation to their weight, compared with adults. If they are exposed to the same amount of a substance as an adult, they may take in a larger quantity.

### **INFORMATION ABOUT HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN PRODUCTS**

As a consumer, you have a right to certain information about the things you are buying.

Chemical products, such as paint, glue and dishwashing detergent must be marked with hazard symbols if they have been deemed dangerous.

Products such as soap, cosmetics and skin creams should always have a list of ingredients.

Other articles, such as clothing, toys and electronics can also contain harmful chemicals. If a product contains especially hazardous substances, you, as a consumer, are entitled to obtain this information within 45 days of your request. Read more about this in the section *Very hazardous substances* on page 28.

### **BEFORE YOUR CHILD IS BORN**

During pregnancy, it is important to err on the side of caution and not expose yourself to chemical substances unnecessarily. At the early stages of a pregnancy, a great deal happens to a baby's body.

During the early stages of development, an embryo is extra sensitive. The baby gets some protection from the placenta. This organ serves as a barrier between the mother and the baby, and should prevent toxins from passing, but it does not shield the baby from everything. That's why it's important for a pregnant woman to be careful about exposure to various substances.

Maintain good ventilation at home, don't use chemicals unnecessarily, and avoid long-term exposure to products such as detergents and paints. Perfume is something else you ought to be careful with.

Much of the advice in this brochure is important to follow in order to protect your unborn baby.



## **Reduce the risks for children at home**

It's only natural to want to make your home as lovely as possible for your newborn baby. Maybe you want to paint and wallpaper the nursery and buy everything new. However, your baby will feel better if you refrain from this. Paint, building material and textiles give off the most chemicals when they are new.

If you build or paint the nursery, it's important to really air out the room, and wait a couple of weeks before you let your baby sleep there. New particleboard gives off formaldehyde, which can cause allergies. Plastic-coated wallpaper and PVC flooring may contain harmful plasticisers. Paint can also give off substances that can cause allergies. Because chemicals attach to dust and young children are often on the floor, it's a good idea to keep your home fairly free of dust. It's also advisable to maintain good ventilation.

### **BEDCLOTHES**

It's wise to always wash new sheets, blanket covers and pillow cases before using them, as new textiles may contain residues of the chemicals used in the manufacturing process, or for avoiding creases during transport.

### **MATTRESSES**

A number of harmful chemicals are used in the manufacturing of foam rubber mattresses. Although these should not be present once the mattress is finished, sometimes the chemicals remain. If your child's mattress smells of chemicals, it makes sense to let it air out for a few days before your child sleeps on it.

### **CLOTHING AND OTHER TEXTILES**

Always wash new clothes before your child puts them on. This is a good rule that makes it easier to protect your child.

The manufacturers use chemicals to dye and impregnate textiles and make them flame-resistant. Certain chemicals can often also be applied to clothing to prevent them from becoming creased or damaged by moisture during long transport.

There are various children's clothes that have environmentally-friendly labels. These labels indicate that the garments in question have been manufactured with less environmental impact and do not contain any allergenic chemical residue.

Use laundry detergents that have little impact on the environment



and your health. Rivets, zippers, clasps and other metal attachments on clothing may contain nickel. Long-term contact with nickel can cause your child to develop an allergy. There are stated limits to how much nickel a metal attachment are allowed to give off.

You can check the metal attachment using a nickel test that can be purchased in well-stocked pharmacies.

Chromium, formaldehyde and latex are additional substances that can be found in clothing, and that can cause allergic reactions.

There are special regulations for Azo dyes that limit their use in textiles and leather products. The reason for this is that Azo dyes can break down into substances that may cause cancer.

Soft plastic printing on clothing can contain plasticisers known as phthalates. Certain phthalates are harmful to your health and are not allowed in toys and childcare products, but may be used in clothing and shoes. You can read more about phthalates in the section, *Plastic toys* on page 13.

## **SHOES**

Plastic shoes or shoes with plastic attachments may also contain phthalates. Shoes can also contain chromium and fungicides that can cause allergic reactions. Dimethyl fumarate (DMF) is a fungicide that has been proved to cause serious allergic reactions. This substance has been prohibited in Swedish products since 2009.

## **PLASTIC PACKAGES AND BABY BOTTLES**

Avoid heating baby food in plastic packages and plastic bottles, because chemical substances, such as bisphenol A, may leak from the plastic. Also avoid scratched baby bottles and plastic packages as scratches increase the risk.

Store food in glass containers instead.

Since 2011, bisphenol A has been prohibited in baby bottles throughout the EU, but had previously been common.

Plastic bottles and food containers marked with the number 7 or the letters PC consist of polycarbonate and can contain bisphenol A.



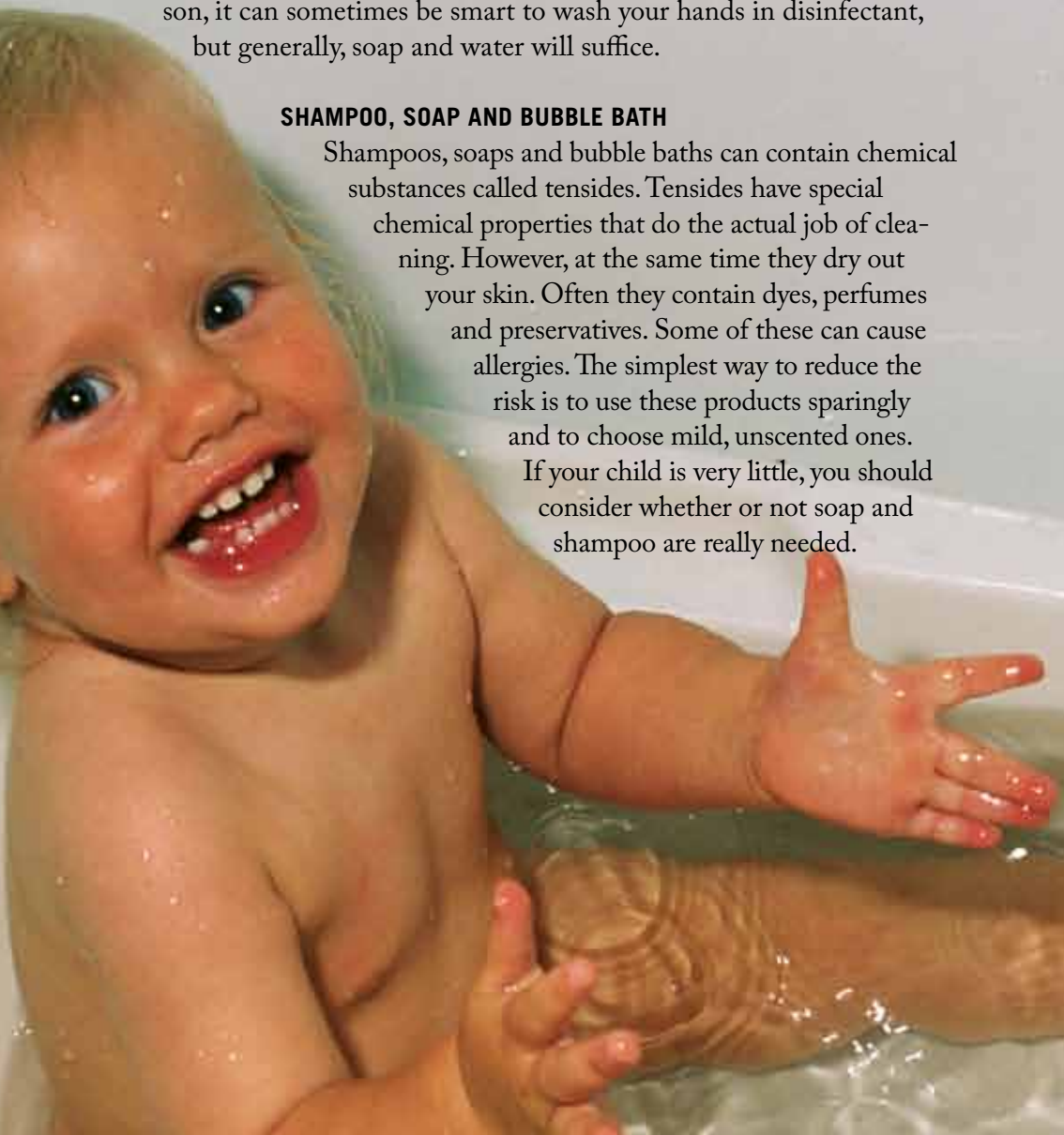


## Clean and tidy

Hygiene is important, but that doesn't mean that your child or your home must be clinically clean. Antibacterial products are not necessary. Most of the bacteria found on a child's body are beneficial. In flu season, it can sometimes be smart to wash your hands in disinfectant, but generally, soap and water will suffice.

### **SHAMPOO, SOAP AND BUBBLE BATH**

Shampoos, soaps and bubble baths can contain chemical substances called tensides. Tensides have special chemical properties that do the actual job of cleaning. However, at the same time they dry out your skin. Often they contain dyes, perfumes and preservatives. Some of these can cause allergies. The simplest way to reduce the risk is to use these products sparingly and to choose mild, unscented ones. If your child is very little, you should consider whether or not soap and shampoo are really needed.



## **TOOTHPASTE**

Some toothpastes contain antibacterial agents such as triclosane, and are marketed as a way of fighting gum infections. In general, however, children do not need antibacterial toothpastes. So don't choose them. Also make sure that children don't get too much fluoride. Use less toothpaste and check that your children are not swallowing too much. Children should not use more than a pea-sized quantity of toothpaste.

## **BATH CRAYONS**

Bath crayons and similar products are considered cosmetics, and therefore require complete lists of ingredients. Reading these can help you avoid substances to which your child may be sensitive. It's wise to avoid products that do not display a list of ingredients.

## **WIPES**

Wipes can be practical when you change nappies. However, they generally contain perfume and preservatives, and it is unnecessary to expose your children to these. Choose an unscented alternative, and view wipes as a convenience in tight situations rather than for daily use.

## **SKIN CREAMS**

If your child's skin is dry and needs to be moisturized, avoid scented skin cream. Most skin creams contain preservatives. These can cause allergies, but skin creams completely free of preservatives are rare. Always read the list of ingredients if you know your child is sensitive.

## **HAIR DYES**

Permanent hair dyes and toners contain powerful chemicals that can be very harmful and cause allergic reactions. Consequently, these products should never be used on children. Also be careful to store hair dyes in a safe place.



## Play and discover

“Imagine if we had these when we were kids”, grandparents often say when they see the incredible variety of colourful, attractive toys in a child’s room or a toy store.

The offerings expand and change all the time. But, as all parents notice, a child’s delight often passes quickly. Things break or lose their attraction. What remains are heaps of plastic waste that must be disposed of.

Toys are a group of products subject to higher standards of safety, and old toys can contain hazardous substances that are now prohibited. It’s not a good idea to allow children to unscrew old machinery to play with it and learn about how things work. After all, these can contain hazardous substances.



### PLASTIC TOYS

Plastic toys enter a child’s life almost immediately after birth. Babies like sucking and chewing on teething rings and other soft plastic objects. Many toys are made of plastic with stabilisers and plasticisers added. Some of these substances are hazardous to health and the environment.

Phthalates are a group of chemical substances that can be used to make plastic softer. DEHP, DBP and BBP are phthalates that can affect the balance of certain hormones in the body and impair fertility. As a result of this, their presence in all toys and childcare articles in concentrations higher than 0.1 percent has been prohibited since January 2001.

As a precaution, the phthalates DINP, DIDP and DNOP are prohibited in toys and childcare articles that a child can put in his mouth.

Because children are especially sensitive, these three phthalates should be avoided as much as possible.

The term *childcare articles* means products that make it easier for a child to relax, sleep, be kept clean, get fed, or suck on something.

It is important to be aware that harmful phthalates are prohibited only in toys and certain childcare products. Because phthalates may be found in products that are not toys, you should not allow your child to chew and suck on plastic objects. Phthalates appear in many different varieties of plastic, but are most common in PVC plastic (polyvinyl chloride). PVC plastics can contain up to 50 percent plasticisers.

### **CRAYONS, PENS, PAINT, GLUE**

Naturally, children should be able to draw, paint, cut and paste without being exposed to health hazards. Most paints and glues intended for children are water-based. Although water-based products may contain preservatives that can cause allergies, they are preferable to solvent-based products, since solvents can affect the nervous system.

Don't let children paint their bodies too much with finger paints and other similar products. Although occasional use is fine, allowing a child to be painted as a tiger or an astronaut for days may result in the child's developing allergies against preservatives, dyes or scents.

Children should not play with oil paints of the type that artists use. Not only can these contain toxic dyes, but they also require turpentine as a solvent. Acrylic paints can be an option for children who are a little older and want to paint "for real".

### **JEWELLERY**

Jewellery and other metal objects may contain nickel and various other heavy metals, such as lead and cadmium. Sometimes heavy metals are added to make jewellery heavy so it feels more genuine. Avoid jewellery that is cheap and heavy.

Lead can affect children's mental development and learning ability, as well as cause difficulties in concentration. It can be very dangerous for a child to suck on an object that contains high concentrations of



lead. Cadmium is a metal that remains in your body for a long time, and excessive amounts can impair kidney function and lead to brittle bones. You can read more about nickel in the *Clothing and textile* section on page 6.

### **MAKEUP**

Children's makeup and stage makeup are fun and exciting, but are not something children should wear all day. There is a risk that children can develop allergies to preservatives, dyes and aromatic substances.

All cosmetics require a list of ingredients so you can avoid substances you are sensitive to. However, makeup products for children are sometimes poorly marked and lack a list of ingredients. There are several examples of makeup products that have been found to contain lead.



Choose products that have a list of ingredients so that you know their contents, and choose products with asthma and allergy labels. Makeup intended for dolls should not be used on skin.

### **TEMPORARY TATTOOS**

It can be exciting to use temporary tattoos that are painted on your skin. These are often encountered on holidays abroad, but can also be found at markets and festivals in Sweden. But be careful, especially if the dye used becomes black.

Black dye often contains the substance paraphenylenediamine, which is extremely allergenic, and can cause life-long allergy problems with serious eczema. The allergic symptoms may appear immediately, but sometimes take a few days. Ordinary tattoos can also cause reaction and hypersensitivity.

### **ELECTRICAL TOYS AND MACHINES**

As a rule, computers and TV games contain flame retardant that makes them less flammable. But many flame retardants are hazardous to both our health and the environment. When these machines are



used, they can give off small amounts of flame-retardant. This risk is greatest in new machinery. That's why new machines should be left on in a well-ventilated room the first week after you've purchased them.

In 2006, EU introduced new regulations for electrical and electronic products. These regulations limit the use of lead, mercury, cadmium, hexavalent chromium and the flame-retardants polybrominated biphenyls (PBB) and polybrominated diphenylethers (PBDE). In addition, the regulations apply to toys with electrical components. In the summer of 2011, new EU legislation on toys featured more rigorous toy safety standards. From 2013, the number of substances that are not allowed to leach out from toys will be increased. These include strontium, nickel and hexavalent chromium.

It is never advisable to allow children to tinker with electrical machinery. In addition to flame-retardant, these machines can contain substances such as heavy metals and asbestos.

### **OBJECTS THAT FLASH AND MAKE SOUNDS**

Many toys contain batteries, which enable them to flash, toot and play songs. We know today that regular batteries should not be thrown in the trash, as they can contain metals that are hazardous to the environment. Many batteries have also become less dangerous. But small items, such as birthday cards, may contain button batteries that as a rule contain mercury, a substance that can harm our natural environment if it is disposed of with regular trash. These toys should not be thrown in the trash without first prying loose the battery and placing it in a battery disposal container. If you can't pry loose the battery, the entire product should be returned to the store. The seller is responsible for taking care of goods with built-in batteries.

### **FLUID-FILLED ITEMS**

Fluid-filled decorations, mugs and toys that create effects through having various fluids run into each other may contain mineral oil. If these objects break and children ingest the contents, they can suffer from what is known as chemical pneumonia.



## **SCENTED TOYS**

Scented toys can give off aromas that can cause allergies. Beginning in 2013, the most allergenic aromatic substances are banned in toys, and many other aromatic substances must be specified by name on the package of the toy.

## **LUMINESCENT TOYS**

Luminescent necklaces, which can sometimes be purchased at markets and festivals, consist of a thin plastic tube that contains a luminescent fluid. These can contain harmful substances, such as phthalates. Because of this, your child should not be allowed to bite or chew on these objects.

## **MODELLING CLAY, PLAY PUTTY AND SLIME**

Modelling clay and play putty often consist of plastic containing varying amounts of additives. Some of them are made of PVC and may contain harmful phthalates. The toy, Slime, too, can contain hazardous substances. Clays and similar substances should not be used by young children who put things in their mouth and often suck on their fingers.

## **CONSTRUCTION KITS**

Construction kits for cars, planes and boats are meant for older children, and can be dangerous for younger ones. Make sure really young children don't come into contact with glue, paint or other chemicals belonging to older siblings. Older children, too, can require some supervision, so they don't sit with their nose over paint cans in unventilated rooms. Paints and glues in construction kit packages almost always contain solvents.

## **RAPEX WARNS ABOUT DANGEROUS TOYS**

The EU has an information and warning system for those toys and other products that have been recalled because they are hazardous. This is called RAPEX, and can be found on the website of the European Commission. There are pictures and descriptions of these dangerous products. Read more about RAPEX on page 28.

# Outdoors

It's good for children to be outdoors. Indoor air normally contains more mould, mites, chemicals and dust than does outdoor air. An exception may need to be made for air near roads with heavy traffic. Automobile exhaust contains many substances that are harmful to health.

## **SANDBOXES AND WOODEN PLAY EQUIPMENT**

A playground has many wooden structures, such as jungle gyms, sandboxes and benches. Wood used outdoors is often impregnated. Sometimes, old railway ties or telephone poles that are impregnated with creosote are recycled. These are not allowed in playgrounds. Creosote leaches out allergens and carcinogens, especially in warm weather. Creosote-treated wood is black or brown, and smells of tar. Some other impregnated substances contain dangerous metals, such as copper, chromium and arsenic. These metals slowly leach out into the environment. This type of lumber is called CCA-impregnated, and has been prohibited in new playgrounds since December 2002. Use untreated lumber if you are building a sandbox, and make this more durable by oiling in the wood.

## **MOSQUITO AND TICK REPELLENTS**

Mosquito and tick repellents may contain substances that can irritate your eyes and skin, and excessive use may produce a toxic reaction. Use them sparingly. Instead, dress your children in clothing that covers a greater part of their bodies, and apply mosquito repellent only to uncovered skin. Avoid applying the repellent around the eyes and mouth and on the hands. Children below the age of three years should not come in contact with mosquito or tick repellents at all.

## **IN THE GARDEN**

Chemical weed killers and insecticides are often hazardous to one's health, and must be handled with the greatest of care. Consider tending your garden without chemical pesticides.



## **SUNSCREEN**

People who spend time out in strong sun risk developing skin cancer, and children who get sunburned have a greater risk of developing skin cancer later in life. Babies less than one year old should not be exposed to direct sunlight, and older children who spend time in strong sunlight should be protected by clothing, a sunhat and sunscreen for areas not covered by clothing. Remember that the sun shines most intensely in the middle of the day (11 a.m. – 3 p.m.), and this is the time when it's especially important to protect oneself against the sun, or try to avoid it.

Rub in sunscreen before you go out. It's important to use a sufficient amount of sunscreen, and to reapply it after bathing or drying off with a towel. Read the instructions on the product, and remember that sunscreen never provides complete protection from the sun.

Clothing is the best protection.

## In the adult world

Children usually like to help out and be part of all the exciting things that adults do. Make sure, however, not to expose them to unnecessary risks.

We use large amounts of chemicals in our homes, gardens and garages. In all those tins and bottles full of household chemicals, automobile maintenance products, fuel and detergents, there are many substances that create an acute risk of poisoning.

All chemicals can be dangerous if used incorrectly. Three good ways to reduce risks are to dispose of unnecessary products, not use more than what is necessary, and store all chemicals in child-proof locations.

Child-proof packages do not provide an absolute guarantee that children cannot open them. It just takes them longer to do so. Test that the child-proof seal works before you purchase the product. Store chemicals in their original packaging, and never in soft drink bottles or cookie boxes. If an accident happens despite your precautions, and a child ingests, or is otherwise exposed to, a dangerous substance, phone 112 and ask for the Swedish Poisons Information Centre (*Gif tinformati onscentralen*).

### **WASH, CLEAN, DO DISHES**

Laundry detergent is dangerous to ingest. That's why it's important to keep packages of detergent away from young children. Keep in mind the risk of allergies. Most detergents contain aromatic substances, which can sometimes cause allergies. Liquid products may also contain preservatives.

Fabric softeners can lead to increased risk of allergy as these products remain on clothing, and thus come in direct contact with your child's skin. Consider whether you need a fabric softener agent at all.

As a rule, dishwasher detergent can irritate your skin and has a warning symbol. Store it in a place out of the reach of children.

Detergents, floor polish and similar products should also be kept out of the reach of children.



Remember to keep an eye on the bottles even when you're using them, and screw the cap on securely. Make an effort to reduce your use of cleaning chemicals. This also will reduce environmental impact. Many oven-cleaning products are corrosive, try to avoid them.

### **PAINT, REPAIRING, FIXING**

Drain clog remover, which contains caustic soda (sometimes called lye), is extremely corrosive and can lead to death. Generally, this is not needed in your home. Drain clogs can be fixed mechanically with a water snake, for example.

Lamp oil and paraffin oil have caused several cases of poisoning when children have felt tempted to drink the fluid. Today, it is prohibited to sell dangerous lamp oils that have been coloured. The package must also display a warning text that informs the user to store the lamps out of the reach of children.

Painters' naphtha, paints, varnish and sprays with organic solvents should not be used in rooms where children are present. Don't let your brushes soak in solvent in places children can access. Cover with a cap or plastic bag.

## **THE GRILL**

Every year, many children are injured after having ingested lighter fluid during a barbeque. Even small amounts are enough to cause breathing difficulties in a child. Children can also develop what is known as chemical pneumonia, a serious condition.

Never keep lighter fluid where children can get at it. Remember that the cap must be screwed on securely and that "child-proof" seals are not always child-proof. Use an electric grill starter instead of lighter fluid when you're having a barbeque.

## **MEDICINES**

Medicines can create serious risks for children. Keep your medicines in a cabinet so that children will not get at them by mistake. In the eyes of a child, certain medicines may resemble candy.

## **YOUR CAR**

Most car maintenance products are dangerous to your health if they are used in the wrong way. Keep them out of the reach of children.

Some things are extra dangerous. An example is petrol (gasoline) which is very toxic and gives off fumes that adversely affect your health. Coolant (glycol) is also toxic. Battery acid is highly corrosive.

## **LOW ENERGY BULBS**

Low energy bulbs and tubes contain mercury. This is a metal that can impair brain development. A lit low-energy bulb contains gaseous mercury.

If a warm bulb breaks, you must open the windows, close the door and properly ventilate the room.

The European bulb industry organization recommends that you leave the room for 20 to 30 minutes. Then collect the broken pieces of the bulb, clean the floor with a moist cloth, and then put everything in a glass jar. Mark the jar and give it to a returns management facility for environmentally hazardous waste. Don't use a vacuum cleaner, since this will spread the mercury into the air.



# What does the label mean?

There are symbols and labels of many different types. Some are vital to know, such as the danger symbols on chemical products. Others help you to choose those products that are best for your health and the environment.

## DANGER SYMBOLS

Up until now, the danger symbols have been black with an orange base. In recent years, however, these are being replaced by new symbols, which are uniform throughout the EU. In the foreseeable future, these symbols will be used throughout the world.

The new symbols are black with a white base and a dark red frame. Next to the symbol is a text that explains why the product is dangerous. All hazardous chemical products must be marked with these symbols by law. Although most of the hazardous products are used only by professionals, some are also sold to consumers. A good rule of thumb is to avoid products with danger symbols, and instead use milder alternatives.



**Toxic.** Can cause life-threatening injuries if inhaled, brought into contact with the skin, or ingested.



**Corrosive.** May produce corrosive injuries to the skin, esophagus and eyes, or other eye injuries.



**Hazardous to health.** Can cause hereditary genetic injuries, cancer, foetal injuries, or impair reproduction. Can produce allergy through inhalation, chemical pneumonia through ingestion, and other dangerous injuries through isolated or repeated exposure.



**Harmful.** This product is harmful through inhalation, skin contact or ingestion. Can produce allergies upon skin contact, sedative effects or irritation of the skin, eyes and respiratory tract. The label can sometimes mean that the product is harmful to the ozone layer.



**Dangerous for the environment.** Can harm the environment short-term or long-term.



**Flammable.** Can burn violently upon ignition of the addition of heat. This label can sometimes mean that the product can develop inflammable gas or spontaneously ignite.



**Explosive.** Can explode if subjected to a blow, friction, sparks or heat. Handle with care.



**Oxidising.** Can create fire or an explosion in contact with inflammable substances or materials.



**Gas under pressure.** Product is a pressurised or very much cooled gas. The container can explode in the case of fire.



**Tactile warning label.** Most of the chemical products that have health risks and that are sold to the public are required to have a marking for the visually impaired.

## DANGER SYMBOLS THAT MAY BE USED UNTIL 2015



Toxic/  
very toxic



Corrosive



Harmful/  
Irritant



Dangerous  
for the en-  
vironment



Explosive



Highly/  
extremely  
flammable



Oxidising

## OTHER LABELS



**Svanen** (the Swan), **Bra Miljöval** (Good Environmental Choice), and the **EU Ecolabel** (previously, the EU flower) are three independent environmental labels for products and services. They have extensive environmental requirements and monitor that the products comply with these.



**Svalan** (The Swallow) is the label of the Asthma and Allergy Association and is placed on hypoallergenic products.



**Öko-Tex** is a label for textiles that have been tested for harmful substances, such as allergens, dyes and heavy metals.



**The Hand in Book symbol** is placed on a cosmetic product if additional information is available elsewhere, such as in an annexed folder, or on a label, tape or card. The information can be about the list of ingredients, warning labels or user information, for example.

## Words and concepts

**Articles.** REACH distinguishes between substances, mixtures and articles. Articles are defined as objects in which the shape or design determines its function to a greater degree than its chemical composition, for example clothing, toys and electronics.

**Childcare articles.** Products that make it easier for a child to relax, sleep, be kept clean, get fed, or suck on something.

**CMR substance.** Carcinogenic or mutagenic substance or substance toxic to reproduction. In other words, one that can cause cancer, damage genes or disrupt reproduction.

**ECHA** The European Chemicals Agency.

**Candidate list.** EU's list of the substances that are of very high concern and are candidates for phase out. These can be carcinogenic, disrupt fertility or be persistent. The candidate list is updated continually. This list can be found on the websites of the Swedish Chemicals Agency ([www.kemikalieinspektionen.se](http://www.kemikalieinspektionen.se)) and ECHA ([echa.europa.eu](http://echa.europa.eu)).

**Chemicals.** This brochure uses the term chemicals to mean chemical substances and mixtures of substances. Not all substances and mixtures are hazardous, but this brochure deals with those substances and mixtures that in some way can present a risk to your health or the environment.

**Chemical products.** Products in which the chemical composition is essential for its use, for example paints, solvents and detergents.

**Cosmetic and hygiene products.**

Cosmetic and hygiene products are usually defined as a substance or mixture intended for application to external parts of the human body or the teeth and mucous membranes of the oral cavity exclusively or mainly to clean them, perfume them, change their appearance, protect them, keep them in good condition or correct body odors. For example, cosmetics, soaps and lotions. The Swedish Medical products Agency is the responsible authority.

**Toy Directive.** EU legislation that regulates how toys should be marked and what they may contain. New, stricter chemical-related requirements apply beginning 20 July 2013.

**RAPEX.** EU's warning system for dangerous products. The Swedish Consumer Agency is the coordinating authority in Sweden. Links to RAPEX can be found on the websites of the European Commission, the Swedish Chemicals Agency, and the Swedish Consumer Agency.

**REACH.** EU's overarching chemical legislation. Applies in all EU countries, and regulates how chemicals should be registered, evaluated, approved and limited. REACH stands for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances. Introduced in 2007.

**RoHS Directive.** EU regulation that limits the use of mercury, cadmium, lead, hexavalent chromium, and the flame retardants, PBB and PBDE, in electrical and electronic products. In force beginning on 1 July 2006.

**Very hazardous substances.** If a product contains more than 0.1 percent of a substance listed on the EU candidate list, the seller is required to provide information about this if the consumer requests him to do so. This regulation is found in Article 33 of REACH. The consumer is entitled to obtain the name of the hazardous substance and sufficient information so that the product can be handled in a secure manner. This information must be supplied free of charge within 45 days from the time the consumer requested it.

# Contacts

- **If your child swallowed a chemical** that you believe is dangerous, phone 112 and request the Poisons Information Centre (*Giftinformationscentralen*). In cases that are less of an emergency, you can phone the Poisons Information Centre at 08-33 12 31. During the daytime, they answer questions of a general or preventive nature regarding acute poisoning. The website *www.giftinformationscentralen.se* includes the chemical list with brief information regarding risks, symptoms and actions to be taken in the event of an accident for the most common household chemicals.
- **Municipal consumer advisers** can give you advice on choosing safe and environmentally-friendly products. Most municipalities have their own consumer advisers. Addresses can be found in the telephone directory and at the website of the Swedish Consumer Agency, *www.konsumentverket.se*.
- **Municipal environmental offices** can also provide advice on health and the environment. The address is in the telephone directory.
- **Child health centres** can answer many questions about children's health and safety.
- **The Medical Products Agency** can answer questions about cosmetics and hygienic products. Telephone: 018-17 46 00, website: *www.lakemedelsverket.se*
- **The Asthma and Allergy Association** has informative material about allergy risks, as well as lists of products that are considered good choices with regard to allergies. Telephone: 08-506 282 00, *www.astmaoallergiforbundet.se*
- **Svanen and EU Ecolabel** telephone 08-555 524 00, Miljömärkning Sverige AB, website: *www.svanen.nu*
- **Bra Miljöval** telephone: 031-711 64 50, website: *www.naturskyddsforeningen.se*
- **Cancerfonden** (the Cancer Fund) provides information and advice about sunbathing on its website, *www.cancerfonden.se*.
- **RAPEX**, the EU information and warning system, can be found on the website of the European Commission, *http://ec.europa.eu/consumers*. Links and information can also be found on the Swedish Consumer Agency website by searching for Rapex, *www.konsumentverket.se*.

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Chemicals in the daily life of children is a brochure for the parents of young children, and for everyone who takes care of children. It explains what you can do to reduce the risks of children being injured by the chemicals that surround all of us.

The brochure deals with everything from toys and textiles to paint, building materials and electronic products.