**Possible health effects?**

- Very toxic, carcinogenic and mutagenic
- Disrupts the reproductive and hormone system, and increases cancer risk
- Carcinogenic and impaires fertility. Effects on the developing brain
- Disrupts development and the hormone system, toxic to the reproductive system
- Carcinogenic, toxic by inhalation, impaires fertility, disrupts development of child’s brain
- Carcinogenic, mutagenic, toxic to reproduction
- Disrupts the hormone system
- Carcinogenic, disrupts fertility
- Disrupts development and the hormone system. Impaires fertility
- Very toxic to aquatic life, disrupts the hormone system

**General Tips**

- **Less is more!** Buy fewer toys, aim for quality over quantity.
- Avoid very cheap toys because they often contain more hazardous chemicals.
- Do not buy a toy with a strong chemical or perfumed smell or if it feels uncomfortable to the touch.
- For young children: make sure that no small parts can be pulled off and swallowed.
- Unpack any new toy and leave it outdoors to let some of the hazardous chemicals evaporate.
- Please note that the CE label does not guarantee safety.
- If available notice the German GS mark. It is independent and shows that legal guidelines have been applied.

**Hazardous chemicals**

- Anisole
- Bisphenol A
- Brominated Flame Retardants
- Cadmium
- Chlorinated paraffins
- Chromium
- Formaldehyde
- Lead
- Nonylphenol
- Organovegetables
- Perfluorinated chemicals
- Phthalates (softeners)
- Triclosan

**Possible health effects?**

- Skin, tissue, chromosome and metabolism
- Causes the reproductive and hormone system, and some cancer risk
- Develops developmental and hormone system, leads to the reproductive system
- Causes cancer, loss by mutations, impaires fertility, disrupts development of child’s brain
- Causes cancer, disrupts the hormone system
- Causes cancer and impaires fertility. Effects on the reproductive system
- Causes cancer, disrupts the hormone system
- Causes reproductive and the hormone system, impaires fertility
- Skin to be exposed, leads to the hormone system

**Safe toys**

- Dolls
- Cuddly toys
- Wooden toys
- Plastic
- Art materials & cosmetics
- Electronic toys

**Legend**

- Protect children – avoid hazardous chemicals!

Based on SIN-List www.chemsec.org

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Dolls

Dolls can contain a wide range of hazardous chemicals as they are made of plastic, plush and stuffing, worry dolls, and jewellery or cosmetic components. In extreme cases, motor oil, solvents, and water-based adhesives can be used.

Tips!
- Look for products from natural or organic materials and look for the Oeko-Tex 100 and other white labels.
- Avoid toys before use.
- Wash and dry toys before use.
- Be aware of free or gift toys or toys distributed as part of a promotion.

Wooden toys

The vast array of wooden toys available includes puzzles, building blocks, dolls’ houses, and plastic and wooden cars. Most wooden toys are usually completely safe, but some wooden toys can be hazardous. Some of the wooden puzzles passed the German safety test (Zertifikat) in November 2008. Manufacturers of these toys are more likely to contain the carcinogenic chemical, formaldehyde. Parents should beware of paints and varnishes that can contain lead or other heavy metals.

Tips!
- Look for products from natural or organic materials and look for the Oeko-Tex 100 and other white labels.
- Avoid toys before use.
- Wash and dry toys before use.

Cuddly Toys

This category includes teddy bears, plush and stuffed toys. Toys with long or protruding fibre for other allergic conditions and hazardous brominated flame retardants, as well as fibre and forms that could be swallowed by a child. A testing for Best Buy’s is available from the Ethical Consumer organisation. [http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/](http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/)

Tips!
- Do not buy fragranced toys, as these can trigger lifelong fragrance allergies, which cannot be cured.
- Choose products with food or plant colourings and without perfume or phthalates.
- Make your own finger paints or pastels.
- Check out Greenpeace’s rankings of electronics companies on their toxic policy: [http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/)
- For children avoid buying electronic and battery operated toys.

Art materials & cosmetics

This category includes crayons, pens, paints, playdoh, finger and face paints, and cosmetic sets, which can contain products, formaldehydes and phthalates. In 2009, the Canadian Department of Internal Health found unacceptable levels of heavy metals like lead, arsenic, mercury, cadmium and antimony in children’s face paints.

Tips!
- Check out Greenpeace’s ratings of electronics companies on their toxic policy: [http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/)
- For children avoid buying electronic and battery operated toys.

Plastic

Soft plastic toys such as synthetic rubber toys, balloons, bath toys, etc. can contain hormone disrupting phthalates. There are numerous global and European scares. In 2004 it was discussed that Sooky-Dee (plastic buddy) had up to 50% of phthalates. Soft plastic toys are often because they are too likely to contain phthalates. However, even these they can also sometimes contain heavy metals and other hazardous substances.

Tips!
- Do not buy fragranced toys, as these can trigger lifelong fragrance allergies, which cannot be cured.
- Choose products with food or plant colourings and without perfume or phthalates.
- Make your own finger paints or pastels.

Electronic toys

These include battery-powered and electronics products such as games consoles, games toys, mobile phones, electric cars, trains and computers. Hazards include brominated flame retardants as well as poisoning risks from leaking batteries.

Tips!
- Check out Greenpeace’s rankings of electronics companies on their toxic policy: [http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/)
- For children avoid buying electronic and battery operated toys.

What’s the problem?

Many toys contain synthetic substances, which are known to be hazardous to children’s health. These include softeners used in plastic which can disrupt hormones, formaldehyde used in glue and other adhesives, and phthalates in kids’ bears that can be toxic to development.

Tips!
- Do not buy fragranced toys, as these can trigger lifelong fragrance allergies, which cannot be cured.
- Choose products with food or plant colourings and without perfume or phthalates.
- Make your own finger paints or pastels.

Produce toys

These include battery-powered and electronics products such as games consoles, games toys, mobile phones, electric cars, trains and computers. Hazards include brominated flame retardants as well as poisoning risks from leaking batteries.

Tips!
- Check out Greenpeace’s rankings of electronics companies on their toxic policy: [http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/](http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/toxics/)
- For children avoid buying electronic and battery operated toys.

Why are children particularly vulnerable?

Children are more sensitive to exposure to toxic chemicals than adults because of their larger skin surface in proportion to their weight, their higher respiratory volume and increased metabolic rate. Consequently, they absorb more hazardous chemicals than an adult. Their immune and nervous systems are still developing. Hazardous chemicals are also found in cosmetics, furniture and other everyday products. So children are exposed to a variety of hazardous chemicals from many different sources. Even the smallest amounts of hazardous chemicals can be sufficient to harm the development of a child – sometimes with lifelong consequences. The increasing allergy and cancer rates demonstrate this.

More information, please visit our website [www.wecf.eu](http://www.wecf.eu)