

Healthy Furnishings for Safer Child Care

Information on carpet, flooring, furniture and more

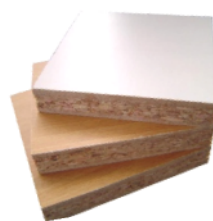


Choosing furnishings is important for more than just comfort, looks and cost – products like carpeting, upholstered furniture, and pressed wood can contain toxic chemicals that can linger, affecting indoor air quality long after the initial purchase. These products degrade over time and during use. When they do, chemical preservatives, flame retardants, or stain-resisters are released and build up in house dust, and in our bodies. Since we spend 90% of our time indoors, identifying the healthiest possible interior furnishings before you buy can make a difference.

What to Avoid

Formaldehyde: Used in glues and adhesives for particleboard and plywood, formaldehyde is highly flammable and has a noticeable odor. People breathe in formaldehyde when it off-gasses from furniture. Formaldehyde is a carcinogen and asthmagen.

🔍 **Spot it:** Particleboard, plywood, fiberboard furniture and cabinets, flooring adhesive.



Polyvinylchloride (PVC) or Vinyl: PVC is often made with phthalates to make it flexible. Inside our bodies, phthalates can act like hormones, leading to reproductive problems, especially in baby boys. They can also promote or trigger allergies and asthma attacks. Over 90% of phthalates are used in vinyl, like flooring in our homes.

🔍 **Spot it:** Vinyl flooring, tiles, wallpaper, and synthetic carpet.



Stain-resistant chemicals: Perfluorinated compounds (PFCs) build up in the environment and do not break down naturally. They are used to make stain-resistant carpets, furniture and drapery fabrics as well as after-market spray treatments. PFCs likely cause cancer, and may cause liver or kidney damage.

🔍 **Spot 'em:** Anything labeled stain-repellant or stain-resistant.

Flame-retardant chemicals: Petroleum-based materials, like polyurethane foam used in soft furnishings, are very flammable. Manufacturers sometimes add chemicals directly to foam. In commercial settings, curtains may have added chemicals to meet flammability standards. These chemicals release from products, build up in our bodies and household dust, and can harm hormone systems and child development.

🔍 **Spot 'em:** Padded furniture, especially filled with polyurethane foam. Carpet padding, especially recycled composite padding, which may contain old, banned flame retardants. Commercial fire-retarded curtains.



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What Can I Do?

- **Look for solid wood**, unpainted furniture, which will not contain formaldehyde, other VOCs or flame-retardant chemicals.
- **Choose furniture that does not contain formaldehyde-containing glues.** Check for labels that say no added formaldehyde (NAF) or ultra-low emitting formaldehyde (ULEF) product.
- If particleboard without the above labels can't be avoided, **finish with a non-toxic sealant** (latex paint won't seal in vapors)
- **Reduce the risk of allergies** and asthma by avoiding carpet and PVC when possible. Instead, you can opt for natural flooring like cork, bamboo, or linoleum.
- **If you choose carpet**, look for one made from recycled PET, not nylon. Extra bonus: PET carpet is naturally stain resistant.
- **Consider whether carpet padding is necessary** – skipping it eliminates a common source of flame-retardant chemicals.
- **Look for “GreenGuard GOLD” certified products.** Carpets, carpet padding, and flooring with this certification emit low- or no-VOCs. (www.greenguard.com)
- **Choose furniture made with polyester fill.** Select furniture identified as flame retardant-free. (See image on this page).
- **Call the manufacturer** and ask which chemicals their product contains.
- **Decline optional stain- or water-proof treatments** and ask for products that have not been pre-treated.

NOTICE

THIS ARTICLE MEETS THE FLAMMABILITY REQUIREMENTS OF CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF ELECTRONIC AND APPLIANCE REPAIR, HOME FURNISHINGS AND THERMAL INSULATION TECHNICAL BULLETIN 117-2013. CARE SHOULD BE EXERCISED NEAR OPEN FLAME OR WITH BURNING CIGARETTES.

The upholstery materials in this product:

___ contain added flame retardant chemicals

X contain NO added flame retardant chemicals

The State of California has updated the flammability standard and determined that the fire safety requirements for this product can be met without adding flame retardant chemicals. The state has identified many flame retardant chemicals as being known to, or strongly suspected of, adversely impacting human health or development.

For More Information

- *Phthalates*: www.ourhealthyfuture.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ehsc_tech_report_2016_rev_single_page_web_2.pdf
- *Formaldehyde*: www.saferchemicals.org/resources/chemicals/formaldehyde.html
- *Flame retardants*: greensciencepolicy.org/topics/consumer-resources/
- *PFCs*: www.watoxics.org/chemicals-of-concern/perfluorinated-compounds-pfcs
- *PVC*: www.greenbuildermedia.com/buildingscience/report-pvc-still-problematic

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a sustainable economy,
and a healthier world.*

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