

Toxic Formaldehyde Hides In Children's Clothing and Bedding

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It would seem that the last place a parent would think to be concerned about finding toxic gas in our child's environment is in their clothing and bedding, but sure enough, here it is! *(And we aren't talking poop pants here folks.)*

We are talking about FORMALDEHYDE. And yes, formaldehyde is probably hiding in some of your babies clothing and bedding right now!

Recently, a study was done on children's clothing manufactured in China. What they found was up to 900 times the level of formaldehyde considered safe by the World Health Organization hiding in some of this clothing. Yep, you read it right....900 times!

The Dangers of Formaldehyde

I typically think of formaldehyde as a preservative for dead bodies. Or, if you have ever seen those effective ads, to persuade children against smoking cigarettes, you may also think of formaldehyde as a deadly ingredient in cigarettes too.

Formaldehyde is a toxic gas that can be dangerous in our children's environments for many reasons.

"These toxic fumes, even in small amounts, can cause nose and eye irritation (burning, itchy, tearing, and sore throat) in children as well as in adults.

Long-term exposure and high concentrations of formaldehyde can lead to cancer. In animal studies, rats exposed to high levels of formaldehyde in air developed nose cancer. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has determined that formaldehyde may reasonably be anticipated to be a carcinogen." 1

So, a whopping 900 times the level considered safe being cloaked on our children is scary.

Limits of Formaldehyde in Textiles

USA does not have any safety standard in place when it comes to formaldehyde limits in textiles. ANYTHING GOES HERE!

Japan and some European countries (Austria, Finland, Germany, Norway and Netherlands and others), laid down national legislation restricting the presence of formaldehyde in textile products.

For example in Germany, following label must be added to textiles: “Contains Formaldehyde. It is recommended to wash this garment before the first use to avoid irritation of the skin” (This notice must be shown either on the product itself, its packaging or its label.)

Why Formaldehyde Is Used In Clothing and Bedding

It is commonly used in the textile manufacturing industry as a stain resistant mechanism, to fix color to a fabric, to give a permanent press effect, to stop shrinking and to make fabric more flame resistant. Also, to prevent mildew, manufacturers use formaldehyde to treat clothes that have to be shipped a long way (Asia to the United States).

The application of formaldehyde primarily concerns cotton, viscose, linen and their blends with synthetic fibers.

Safe Alternative Measures To Help Avoid Formaldehyde Exposure

- Buy 100% Certified Organic Fibers.
- ALWAYS wash clothing and bedding (including comforters) before using. It may not completely wash out, but it will greatly reduce exposure. An additional tip here is to do an overnight soak cycle with your new clothing, adding a cup of baking soda or white vinegar.
- Contact manufacturers directly to see if they contain formaldehyde. And, we will be doing that for you too. *Stay tuned for our letters and responses from popular clothing stores.*
- Look for formaldehyde-free labels, some companies voluntarily do not use formaldehyde in their clothing and bedding.