



## Eco-Healthy Child Care

Eco-Healthy Child Care is a national program created by the Oregon Environmental Council to ensure that child care settings are as healthy, safe and green as possible by reducing children's exposure to toxins.



# Furniture & Carpets

Formaldehyde and toxic flame retardants are the toxins of most concern in household furnishings, as they are both commonly found in furniture and carpets.

### Formaldehyde

Formaldehyde is a flammable, colorless gas that has a pungent odor. It is a human carcinogen, an asthma trigger, and a suspected neurological, reproductive, and liver toxin. People are exposed by breathing contaminated air from pressed wood furniture, flooring, automobile exhaust, cigarette smoke, wood-burning stoves, and after application of certain paints, fabrics, and household cleaners.

### Toxic Flame Retardants

Toxic flame retardants (also known as PBDEs) are widely used in furniture foam, carpet padding, back coatings for draperies and upholstery, plastics, computers, televisions, building materials, and electrical appliances. It is believed that more than 80% of PBDE exposure is from house dust. PBDEs persist in the environment and accumulate in living things. Health concerns associated with PBDE exposure include liver, thyroid, and neurodevelopmental toxicity.

### Tips for Reducing Exposure to Formaldehyde and PBDEs:

1. Avoid wall-to-wall carpets.
2. Limit use of pressed wood products that are made with adhesives that contain urea-formaldehyde resins (UF); choose solid wood furniture.
3. Do not leave foam exposed (this includes furniture and toys, such as stuffed animals).
4. Keep dust levels down.
5. Vacuum often – use a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter vacuum cleaner.
6. Ventilate while cleaning.
7. Remove shoes prior to going indoors.
8. Clean area rugs with biodegradable cleaners.
9. Choose floor coverings that are made with natural fibers (cotton, hemp, and wool) that are naturally fire-resistant and contain fewer chemicals.
10. Choose meats, fish, and dairy products that are low in fat, since PBDEs accumulate in animal fat.

## Companies that Have Phased-Out Formaldehyde and/or PBDEs:

- **Adult and Child Bedding, Mattresses, & Baby Gear.** A Happy Planet, Dream Soft Bedware, Earthsake, Ecobaby, European Sleepworks, Foam Sweet Foam, Lifekind, McRoskey, Natura Sleep Systems, Natural Aurora Mattress, Nirvana Safe Haven, Northern Naturals, Soaring Heart, Organic Bliss Innerspring Mattress, The Organic Mattress & Organic Wear USA.
- **Carpet Padding.** Choose natural fiber (cotton, hemp, and wool) carpet pads.
- **Cell Phones.** LG Electronics, Motorola, Nokia, Panasonic, Samsung & Sony-Ericsson.
- **Electronics.** Apple, Canon, Dell, Ericsson, HP Monitors, IBM, Intel, Sony & Toshiba.
- **Furniture.** Ikea, Bean Products, Berkeley Mills, Furniture & Greener Lifestyles.
- **Futons.** Abundant Earth, Organic Cotton Alternatives & Tonkatinkers Kreationen.
- **Wood.** Columbia Forest Products, Earth-source Forest Products & Plyboo.

## Green Cleaning Products:

Visit *EcoLogo* at [www.ecologo.org](http://www.ecologo.org) or *Green Seal* at [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org) to find cleaning products that are certified as biodegradable and environmentally healthy.

## Recipes for Cleaning Furniture & Carpets:

### Wood Cleaner

1/4 cup white vinegar  
1/4 cup water  
1/2 tsp. liquid soap  
A few drops of olive oil

Combine the ingredients in a bowl, saturate a sponge with the mixture, squeeze-out the excess, and wash surfaces. The vinegar will dissipate.

## Furniture & Carpet Resources on the Internet

- Formaldehyde:  
[www.checnet.org/HealthHouse/chemicals/chemicals-detail.asp?Main\\_ID=346](http://www.checnet.org/HealthHouse/chemicals/chemicals-detail.asp?Main_ID=346)
- Polybrominated diphenylethers (PBDEs):  
[www.epa.gov/oppt/pbde/](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/pbde/)
- PBDE-Free Manufacturer and Product List:  
[www.ewg.org/pbdefree](http://www.ewg.org/pbdefree)
- Smart Shopper's PBDE Card:  
[www.thegreenguide.com/gg/pdf/pbdessc.pdf](http://www.thegreenguide.com/gg/pdf/pbdessc.pdf)
- Choosing Safer Products:  
[www.watoxics.org/safer-products/choosing-safer-products-furniture](http://www.watoxics.org/safer-products/choosing-safer-products-furniture)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Call: 503-222-1963 x119**  
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**Visit: [www.oeconline.org/ehcc](http://www.oeconline.org/ehcc)**

### Carpet Spot Remover

Blot immediately with water. Sprinkle with baking soda, cornstarch, or borax and let dry. Wash with club soda and vacuum.