



Health and Risk Summary: Flame Retardant Chemicals

Consumers and their families are exposed to flame retardant chemicals in multiple ways. Flame retardant chemicals are compounds which can be added to **furniture, plastic products, electrical devices, insulation, construction materials, textiles and children's products**, to delay the production of flames and prevent the spread of fires. If you are like 90% of Americans, you regularly sit on a couch that contains a full pound or more of toxic flame retardant chemicals.

Flame retardant chemicals may **sound like a good idea** but these chemicals do little, if anything, to slow or prevent fire. When the law was passed in 1975 to include these chemicals in everyday products, in-home smoking was more prevalent, and electronics would often overheat. This is not the case anymore.

Moreover, numerous scientific studies show that many of these chemicals are toxic. Flame retardant chemicals constantly migrate from furniture and other products into the air, then settle in dust in the home or workplace and may be ingested by us and our pets.

Many flame retardant chemicals persist in the environment, accumulate in our bodies and the bodies of animals, and have been shown to cause adverse developmental effects.

Scientists have identified flame retardant chemicals as associated with a variety of **human health issues** such as:

- Disrupting hormones, disrupt thyroid function and mimic estrogen
- Disrupting brain development
- Disrupting learning, memory and attention
- Reduced sperm quality
- Lower IQ
- Attention deficit problems
- Reproductive issues
- Cancer

What can you do?

Get the [shopping guide to choose furniture without flame retardant chemicals](#)

Find a store from the [map of retailers offering furniture without flame retardant chemicals](#)

Learn how to [avoid flame retardant chemicals in your home](#)

[Read up on the Legislation on flame retardant chemicals](#)

