### Are there laws to protect us? Ask questions!

#### Many renovating materials, housekeeping Feel free to ask questions in shops! and household materials and furniture You have the right. The REACH regulaare all subjected to the REACH regulation. tion allows retailers 45 days to react to **REACH** regulates the application of harmful questions about the presence of certain govermental decisions for formaldehyde buy. in textile and particleboards, where there is a maximum of the substance allowed. Women in Europe for a Common Future Formaldehyde is not forbidden and there WECF is campaigning for toxic free for example in particleboard in furniture). manufacturers. Support our work. Dyes in textile and leather that create aromatic amines are also forbidden.

## How can you use this guide?

This guide is meant to create awareness Netherlands about the possible existence of certain Phone: 00 31 (0) 30-2310300 harmful chemicals in furniture and renovating tools. WECF gives advice on how to avoid these substances and on how to find alternatives for your baby. Visit our website for further information: www.projectnesting.org www.projectnesting.org

substances. Furthermore, there are several chemical substances in the products you

are exceptions for the maximum amount products in the political arena and by the

For more information visit the websites: www.wecf.eu, www.projectnesting.org Adress: Biltstraat 445, 3572 AW, Utrecht,

## General tips

- If you're pregnant, have someone else renovate. Invest in finding good and safe products, as you will see, they are more and more available and it is worth it.
- Ask experts! They will be happy to help you choose or can refer you to someone else.
- Do not trust the 'green' claims of the producers. Use products that were tested by an independent third party such as the EU eco-label (the EU Flower) and Nordic Swan. Labels can be used as a guide when choosing safe products, depending on what they guarantee.
- Decorate sparsely and choose furniture with smooth surfaces to avoid accumulation of harmful substances and dust indoors.
- Ventilate, ventilate, ventilate! Always ventilate and air regularly: when opening all doors and windows at the same time, fresh air will enter the house. Airing is very important during and after the renovation to let contaminated air out. Make sure there is constant ventilation in the rooms and air out at least 3 times a day for 5-10 minutes.
- Buy all baby products cot, carriage, car seat, mattress long before the baby arrives. Take the products out of the wrapping and let them air out for a couple of weeks (outside, on the balcony or a frequently aired room).
- Wash all products also cuddly toys– a couple of times before use, this way you reduce the amount of harmful substances.

\* PBT stands for Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic, PBT are chemical substances, which only degrade very slowy in the environment and can accumulate in

\*\* CMR stands for Carcinogenic. Mutagenic or toxic to Reproduction: CMR substances are carcinogenic and toxic to reproduction and DNA.

Yalıs Door Luniture Extitles	Toxic chemicals	Possible health & environmental effects	Туре	Application
	Formaldehyde	Irritates mucous membranes and skin; can cause hypersensitivity, allergies and cancer (nasal pathway)	Antibacterial, preservative	In many types of glues, lubricants and paints, ply particleboards furniture, laminate, textiles and le
	Nonylphenol (ethoxylates)	Endocrine disruptor, persistent, accumulates in the environment	Tenside, surface active substance	Textile paper and pulp processing, paints, resins, protecive coatings, detergents, animal medicine, pesticides, steal production
	Heavy metals	Lead can cause brain damage and cadmium can cause kidney damage. Both are classified as CMR	Used in pigments in non natural colorants	Paint and dye, PVC
	Glycolethers	Classiefied as CMR, can harm the unborn child, flammable, harmful when inhaled, in skin contact and swallowing	Solvents, detergents, pesticides, medicine, anti freeze	Plaster paints, acrylic paints, enamel, wood varn resins, detergents, paint and varnish remover, hydrolic liquids
	Xylene and benzene (terpentine)	Harmful to reproduction, unborn child, causes skin irritation and exzema	Solvents, detergents, medicine, anti freeze	Plaster paints, acrylic paints, enamel, wood varnish, resins, detergents, paint and varnish remover, hydro
	PVC	8-16 substances in PVC can cause different types of damage, such as dipentylphthalate (CMR, damaging to unborn child) cadmium, lead and vinylchloride (carcinogenic, on combustion dioxin is released	Synthetic material, soft or rigid, applied for many uses	Piping, textile (t-shirts) gloves, (building) plastic
	Organotins	Irritation of eyes and skin, toxic to reproductive system, on ingestion harmful to central nervous system, endocrine system and reproductive system	Works against bacterial growth, fungus and rot, and sweaty smell	PVC, furniture, t-shirt prints, diapers, tent cloth, and leather
	Brominated flame retardants	PBT some kinds also classified as CMR some as EDC's	Slows the combustion process by several minutes	Polystyrene, textile (furniture fabrics), stuffing o and matresses wrappings, isolation materials, pl
	Biocides	Toxic to living organisms skin irritation, burns, allergies	Intended to kill, deter or render harmless organisms (plants and animals) considered harmful	Wood and wood products, fungicidal paint and t

# plywood, d leather

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# Protect children – **Avoid harmful substances!**

# WECF guide

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Ren

nen in Europe for a Common Future

## On the spot: which room will be the children's room?

Indoors, you are likely to find double the amount of harmful substances as outdoors. Among the sources for health problems you find: mould, tobacco smoke and formaldehvde. You can considerably reduce the exposure of your child to harmful substances by being selective when choosing and

buying the materials and 👞 furniture for the room.

### Tips!

*Choose preferably a room that:* 

- *Is easy to air and ventilate (big windows, ventilation strip)*
- Is not situated too close to an open fireplace or the kitchen.
- Is draft and mould free.
- Start renovating activities well in time. preferably three months before your baby's due date. Make sure that the room and all furniture is thoroughly aired before the baby arrives.



- Choose paint with .little or no solvents' (check the label) or use water based paint. Choose paint over wallpaper: clay plaster and paint let air and moist through and prevent mould.
- *Do you want to you use wallpaper?* Washable (vinyl) paper is very convenient, but contains PVC and (chemical) softeners. Preferably use paper wallpaper and wall paste that is to be mixed with water.
- Avoid adhesives with claims of being anti-mould, as these are very likely to contain biocides.

## Walls and wood

lation

Paint, varnish, kit and glue can contain a large amount of harmful substances. Air the room during and after any renovation activity. Paint from before 1980 may contain lead. Undamaged lead paint can best be recoated, otherwise the paint should be removed with a (harmful) toxic paint remover. For wallpaper, choose a steam removal system over a scraper.

# Floors and floor covering

Babies are in contact with the floor a lot. Hard and smooth floors are easy to keep clean and dust free. Choose tile floors over linoleum in the kitchen and the bathroom. Do not use laminate with PVC this contains chemical softeners (phthalates). Make sure when buying new laminate that it does not contain formaldehvde (ask!) and check what glue was used; sometimes this can be very toxic. Do you prefer carpet? Coconut and sisal are socially and environmentaly friendly. Cotton or wool can contain traces of pesticides and paint; consider a carpet with an eco-label.

### Tips!

- Doorsteps are often sources of accumulated dust and dirt. it is better to keep the floor smooth.
- Choose wooden floors from European wood and bamboo, linoleum, cork linoleum, cork and natural rubber over tropical wood without the FSC label, laminate, vinyl cloth and synthetic rubber with a PVC layer.





- sible at least
- 2-3 times per day for 5-10 minutes. Do this to exchange contaminated indoor air with fresh air and also to avoid moulding.
- Vacuum and mop the floor regularly with chemical free products so that the baby can play safely on the floor.

## Living environment

Moisture and mould can lead to respiratory symptoms. Sources are for example: drying laundry inside, cooking, construction leaks and improper ventilation. Air fresheners do not freshen the air. but spread perfumes that can cause allergies as well as spreading solvents that can initiate smog; both cause headaches, migraines in adults and earinfections in habies

Several substances are banned from products for small children, nevertheless these can still end up in your indoor environment through furniture household machines and electronics.

## Furniture

Furniture, textiles and mattresses can contain a number of harmful substances. The glue, varnish or paint of furniture, even the textile itself, can contain many

harmful substances.



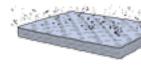
- You can buy formaldehyde free materials in ecological supply stores.
- Look for second hand furniture of real wood or furniture with one of the following eco labels: Ökotex, the European Ecolabel (Euro Flower), FSC-label and Blaue Engel. Look also for furniture made in the EU, this is often produced under stricter environmental regulation than elsewhere.
- Furniture should either connect to the floor or have enough space underneath to vacuum or mop the floor. *The upper side of a closet should be* easy to reach for cleaning or connect *directly to the ceiling.*

## Tips!

- Wash all textiles several times before use, so that you wash away the harmful substances.
- Choose smooth lamellae or shades over curtains, the latter can hold a lot of dust.
- Take a new mattress straight out of the wrapping and let it air out for a long time.
- Once in use, turn the mattress at least once a month. Protect the mattress against wear: put an mattress cover on top of the mattress under the sheet. Air the mattress regularly.
- Choose textile with an eco-label.
- Avoid textiles that are labelled with "wash before first use"; this may mean that formaldehyde is present.

# Textiles and mattresses

Mattresses that have been shipped, from for example China contain different chemicals to keep them insect and mould free. A large range of chemicals is normally used to colour textiles or make them wrinkle and stain free. Additionally cotton textiles can contain traces of pesticides that were used during the growing process.





# Protect children – Avoid toxic chemicals!

#### What are the risks for the baby's health?

Babies and young children are exposed to numerous chemicals everyday through products they use. Prolonged contact - for example while sleeping and playing on the floor – enhances penetration/inhalation into the body. Chemical substances can enter the body through the skin, but also through inhalation and through mouth contact. The baby's development is primarily regulated through hormones, often in very small quantities. If a hormone disrupting substance influences the process of development, there could be a negative, even irreversible, impact. In this way, chemicals can change the signals of the endocrine system, and in the long run, have an effect on the reproductive organs, as well as on the by inhaling through the nose. Therefore, behaviour of the child.

mportant sources for this quide: Dutch En<u>vironmental</u> rganisation, Dutch State institute for Healthcare and nvironment, SINIist Chemsec, a new Dutch institute for Food and Consumer products

#### Why are children particularly vulnerable?

Children are more sensitive to chemical substances because their entire body (immune system, nerve system, brain, organs) is developing and not yet mature. The baby's skin is not only more vulnerable (the barrier function of the skin is not completely formed), it is also more permeable than an adult skin. A baby breathes much guicker than an adult and the lungs are not fully formed. Therefore, babies inhale more substances per kilogram of bodyweight than an adult. Moreover, the body of the baby is not yet capable of detoxing all substances properly, keeping them in the body longer and and therefore prolonging the body's exposure. Substances can even reach the brain certain substances that are considered "safe" by European legislation can still be harmful for small children according to scientiffic studies and health organisations.