

FLAME RETARDANTS IN FURNITURE FOAM: REDUCING YOUR EXPOSURE

The basics



Flame retardant chemicals (FRs) are sometimes added to furniture.

Exposure to FRs is linked to adverse health effects. **Children are at highest risk** because they spend more time on the ground and put non-food items in their mouths.

For children, **even small doses can matter**—they breathe, eat, and drink relatively more than adults, and their bodies and brains are still developing.

Buying furniture



It is difficult to know if a piece of furniture foam contains FRs. Manufacturers are usually not required to disclose this information. Some may not even be aware that their products contain FRs.

Furniture sold in California should have a label that indicates whether FRs are present.

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
 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.

Around your home



Studies show that regular **home cleaning** and consistent **hand washing** can reduce the level of FRs that get into our bodies.

Flame retardants are mainly transported by house dust, so efforts that limit our exposure to dust should also limit exposure to FRs.

Testing your furniture



If you are unsure about your furniture, you can also use our **free testing service!** The Duke University Foam Testing Project will test your foam samples for the presence of nine common FRs.

Learn more about the testing service and how to participate at bit.ly/Foamtest

Cooper et al. 2016. "Results from Screening Polyurethane Foam Based Consumer Products for Flame Retardant Chemicals: Assessing Impacts on the Change in the Furniture Flammability Standards". *Environmental Science and Technology*.

Gibson et al. 2019. "Flame retardant exposure assessment: findings from a behavioral intervention study". *Journal of Exposure Science & Environmental Epidemiology*.



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early life exposures, later life consequences

NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Superfund Research Program