

Formaldehyde in Children's and Consumer Products

Minnesota law limits formaldehyde in products used in children's personal care products or certain ingestible products. Take caution when purchasing children's creams, lotions, and similar products. Some products may contain formaldehyde. High levels of formaldehyde may present a hazard to children.



Formaldehyde and health risks

Formaldehyde is often included in creams, lotions, pastes and similar products as a preservative to inhibit growth of bacteria and extend product shelf life.

Formaldehyde is an eye and skin irritant and can make lungs and skin more sensitive to other irritants. At high levels formaldehyde can also cause cancer.



Actions you can take as a consumer

- Avoid products with formaldehyde on the label or ingredient list.
- Look for other ingredients that indicate formaldehyde may become present in the product:
 - Paraformaldehyde
 - Diazolidinyl urea (Germall II)
 - Dimethyloldimethyl hydantoin (Glydant, DMDM hydantoin or DMDMH)
 - Quaternium-15
 - Imidazolidinyl urea (Germall 115)
 - Methenamine
 - 2-Bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol (Bronopol)
 - Poly(p-toluenesulfonamide-co-formaldehyde)
 - Tris(hydroxymethyl) nitromethane (Tris Nitro)
 - Hydroxymethylglycinate (Suttocide A), or sodium hydroxymethylglycinate
- If you find a children's product in a store and it lists formaldehyde as an ingredient, please report it to the Chemicals in Products Interagency Team (CPIT) via email, at p2.pca@state.mn.us.



Things to keep in mind

Formaldehyde in a children's product does not necessarily mean that the product is harmful or that there is any violation of safety standards or laws. Many factors determine the potential for harm, including:

- how much formaldehyde is in the product;
- how much formaldehyde children are exposed to;
- how often and for how long they are exposed;
- whether they are exposed by swallowing the product, getting it on their skin, or breathing it in;
- exposure to formaldehyde from other sources at home, school, daycare, or outdoor air; and
- the child's overall state of health.

Did you know formaldehyde can be found in:



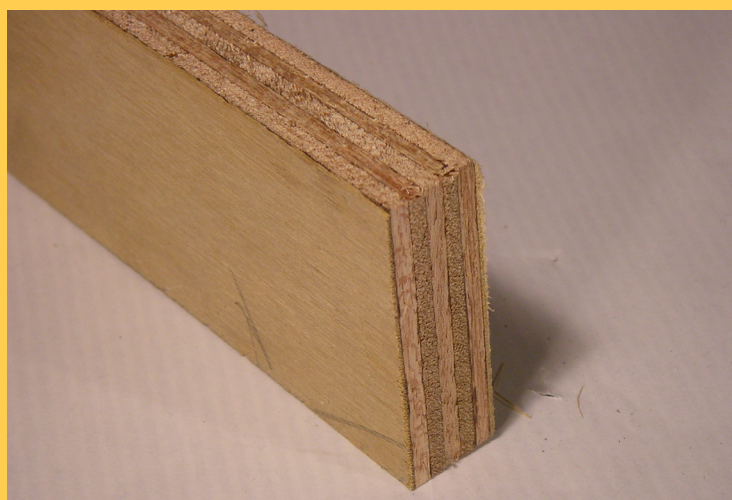
Personal care products



Preservatives in household cleaners



Wooden toys



Composite wood products

Other preservatives used in products are parabens. Consumers may wish to avoid products containing parabens because exposure to some parabens has been associated with hormone changes. This connection suggests parabens may not meet the definition of safer replacements for formaldehyde as required by Minnesota law.

Alternative products

The Chemicals in Products Interagency Team (CPIT) cannot review and approve specific products, but here are independent reviewers you can try:

- [Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep Cosmetic Database webpage](#) or [EWG's Healthy Living app](#)
- [Ecology Center's Healthy Stuff product search](#)
- [Green Seal's product search](#)
- [MADE SAFE's certified products listing](#)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency Safer Choice](#)

Contacts for the Chemicals in Products Interagency Team (CPIT) Agencies

- Toy and children's product compliance:
Minnesota Department of Commerce
Email: consumer.protection@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-539-1600
- Product testing and safer product chemistry
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Email: p2.pca@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-296-6300 or 800-657-3864
- Chemicals of high concern to children; risks:
Minnesota Department of Health
Email: health.risk@state.mn.us
Phone: 651-201-4899