

For Immediate Release: May 10, 2017



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Car Seat Detox Challenge

National Groups Call On Leading Car Seat Brands To Deliver Toxic-Free Car Seats

MAY 10, 2017—[Ecology Center](#), in collaboration with four national partner organizations, today issued a challenge to leading car seat manufacturers to develop and produce car seats without the use of toxic chemicals that can have harmful effects on children’s health.

The **Car Seat Detox Challenge** is a response to laboratory testing conducted by Ecology Center over the past ten years. Recent testing found that 87% of car seats tested by the Ecology Center’s Healthy Stuff program contained brominated flame retardants, which are potentially toxic and persistent in the environment. Halogenated compounds (including brominated flame retardants), triaryl phosphates and other added toxic flame retardant chemicals have been shown to migrate out of products to contaminate air and dust, potentially exposing children to harmful chemicals. ***Important note: Car seats provide vital crash protection. Children should always ride in a properly installed seat, regardless of chemical hazard.***

Ecology Center issued the challenge in partnership with four national groups: [Getting Ready for Baby](#); [Healthy Babies Bright Futures](#); [Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families’ Mind the Store Campaign](#) and [Safer States](#). The groups challenge manufacturers to develop a safer chemicals policy within a year, create an action plan and eliminate and safely substitute hazardous chemicals in their products.

“It’s possible to make car seats that meet the federal standard without added flame retardants,” explains senior scientist Gillian Z. Miller, Ph.D. from the Ecology Center. “Leading car seat manufacturers should be using their technology and resources to make non-toxic car seats, and we know some of them are making good progress. Safe and affordable car seats should not have to come with the potential costs of chemical exposure.”

In April 2017, UPPAbaby unveiled its new MESA Henry car seat model, the first and only car seat to pass federal safety standards without the use of fire retardant chemicals. It did this by making material changes (such as using wool to make the fabric naturally fire resistant) to deliver a car seat without any added toxic flame retardants. UPPAbaby offers the new model in

infant size only and at a price higher than industry average.

“UPPAbaby has made a commendable step, showing it is possible to design car seats that pass legally mandated flammability tests without harmful additives,” says Melissa Cooper Sargent, Green Living Resources Director at the Ecology Center. “We’d like to see Baby Trend, Cosco, Evenflo, Graco and Safety 1st take up the challenge to protect millions of children each year from exposures to hazardous chemicals.”

Exposures to toxic flame retardants have been associated with an array of negative health effects including reduced IQ, developmental delays, autism, hormone disruption, reproductive harm, obesity and cancer. Children are more vulnerable than adults to the harmful effects of toxic chemicals because their bodies and immune systems are still developing. Pound for pound, children breathe more air than adults and are prone to putting their hands and other objects in their mouths, further increasing chance of exposure.

The **Car Seat Detox Challenge** encourages parents, caregivers and concerned citizens to join the effort in calling upon manufacturers to develop safer car seats for children by signing the [petition](#) and joining the [Car Seat Detox Challenge Facebook group](#).

Sign the Petition 

Find us on 

#CarSeatDetox

ECOLOGY CENTER CAR SEAT STUDY

Ecology Center’s latest car seat study led to the development of the Car Seat Detox Challenge. Testing child car seats periodically for ten years, the Ecology Center has been tracking changes in chemical additives. Car seats are a required product in which babies and children often spend a few hours per day. The flame retardant (FR) chemicals historically used in car seats to meet federal flammability standards include known carcinogens, hormone disruptors, and developmental toxicants. Exposure occurs through contamination of air and dust. Safer alternatives are available, and while testing has shown trends away from the worst chemicals, companies can still do much better. In the 2016 study, the Ecology Center analyzed flame retardants and other chemicals in 15 infant and toddler car seats purchased in 2016, including two from the United Kingdom. The brands tested for this study included BabyTrend, Britax, Chicco, Clek, Cosco, Diono, Evenflo, Graco, Joie (from the UK), Maxi-Cosi, Nuna, Orbit, Recaro and Safety 1st. Three different analytical techniques were used: X-ray fluorescence, infrared spectroscopy, and gas chromatography with mass spectrometry. **Please visit the [Ecology Center’s 2016 Car Seat Study](#) for more information.**

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