



# Prescriptions for PREVENTION



Guidance from the Western States  
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

## Flame Retardants Including Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs)



### Did you know?

**P**BDEs are flame-retardant chemicals that are used in many consumer products, such as mattresses, upholstery, rugs, and electronics. Although PBDEs were banned in 2013 from use in new products, they are still present in many materials and can interfere with the body's hormones. Infants and toddlers have higher exposures to PBDEs compared to older children or adults.



### Do

- ✓ **Replace or recover furniture** made before 2005 that has a ripped cover or exposed/crumbling foam filling.
- ✓ Choose furniture that does not have chemical flame retardants.
- ✓ **Dust and clean** your home frequently:
  - ✓ Use a wet cloth (best would be microfiber) and a vacuum fitted with a HEPA filter to remove PBDEs from the dust in your home.
- ✓ Have your children **wash their hands** with soap and water frequently:
  - ✓ Children's hand-to-mouth habits are a major source of PBDE exposure.
- ✓ **Eat vegetarian or select meat, poultry, and dairy** products with a low fat content – PBDEs can build up in the fatty tissues of animals.
  - ✓ When choosing to eat meats and fish, cook in a way that allows the fat to drain off to decrease fat soluble chemicals like PBDEs.



### Don't

- ✗ Don't purchase or reclaim older furniture and products such as mattresses that contain polyurethane foam (look for other kinds of fillings).
- ✗ Don't let young children put electronics in their mouths as they may contain PBDEs.
- ✗ Don't eat farmed fish, such as salmon, which has been shown to have particularly high PBDE levels. Choose wild fish when possible.



For more information, scan the code or visit  
[wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards](https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards)

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