Walgreens, will you Mind the Store?

Walgreens is the nation’s largest drugstore chain. While other leading retailers such as Target and Walmart have begun to take action on toxic chemicals linked to cancer and birth defects in products they sell, Walgreens is unfortunately lagging behind. HealthyStuff.org conducted a study which showed a range of products Walgreens sells contain one or more toxic chemicals. These toxic chemicals include PVC, phthalates, organotins and heavy metals that have been linked to asthma, birth defects, learning disabilities, reproductive problems, liver toxicity, and cancer.

Key Findings

• About 30% (13 of 44) of the products contained chlorine above 3,500 ppm, suggesting the use of PVC, a hazardous plastic.
• Of the 13 vinyl products screened for phthalates, all 13 tested positive for the presence of regulated phthalates at levels greater than 10,000 ppm.
• About 27% (12 of 44) of the products contained antimony based flame retardants, while 20% (9 of 44) contained organotins (> 100 ppm).
• One product, a package of pet tennis balls, contained lead above 100 ppm, exceeding the CPSC limit set on children’s products.
• 1 of 44 of the products contained Br above 400 ppm, suggesting the use of brominated flame retardants.

To see the full results, visit www.HealthyStuff.org

What do these results mean?

The results show that some products sold at Walgreens contain chemicals that are harmful to our health. A variety of products contained chemicals of concern at levels restricted in one or more of the most protective regulatory, corporate and third-party restrictions on hazards in consumer products. HealthyStuff.org consulted existing voluntary standards - as well as mandatory toy, packaging, electronics, and vehicle standards - to establish hazard levels considered low, medium, or high for the chemicals of concern.

Children’s toys can contain no more than 100 ppm of total lead content in the substrate material or 90 ppm in the surface coating. The CPSC has also permanently banned three types of phthalates (DEHP, DBP, BBP) in children’s toys and on an interim basis has banned three phthalates (DINP, DIDP, DnOP) in childcare articles. Toys and infant products can contain no more than 0.1% (1,000 ppm) by weight of any of the listed phthalate plasticizers.

What is Mind the Store?

Mind the Store is a national campaign challenging the nation’s top ten retailers to reduce the prevalence of toxic chemicals in consumer products. Since April 2013, over 60,000 Americans have written to Walgreens urging them to phase out toxic chemicals in the products they sell.

To learn more about the Mind the Store campaign, visit: www.MindTheStore.org

Methodology: HealthyStuff.org analyzed products in March 2014 using two types of spectroscopy, High definition X-ray fluorescence (HDXRF) and Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR), to obtain spectrum of absorption or emission from a substrate material. These are non-destructive methods which allow for the rapid screening of toxic chemicals in consumer products. Additional testing was conducted on select products by organic solvent extraction and GCMS according to CPSC methods (CPSC-CH-C1001-09.3) at a CPSC certified lab.
Select products purchased at Walgreens containing chemicals of concern

Product: 6 Inch Adjustable Wrench  
Brand: Living Solutions  
Distributor: Walgreen Co.  
UPC Code: 49022595354  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern in vinyl grip:  
PVC (174,209 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: DEHP (18.9%)  

Product: Powdered Vinyl Gloves  
Brand: Nice!  
Distributor: Walgreen Co.  
UPC Code: 49022559110  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern:  
PVC (145,216 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: DINP (37.5%), DIDP (1.2%)  

Product: 3-Ring Premium Binder 1 inch  
Brand: Wexford  
Distributor: Walgreen Co.  
UPC Code: 49022318212  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern in vinyl cover:  
PVC (260,395 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: DINP (14.3%), DIDP (2.3%)  

Product: Basics Large Clutch  
Brand: Allegro  
Distributor: Allegro  
UPC Code: 79642014249  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern:  
PVC (283,843 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: >1% regulated phthalates  

Product: Charge and Sync Cable for iPod/ iPhone/iPad 3ft  
Distributor: E-Filliate Inc  
Chemicals of concern in cable insulation:  
PVC (182,571 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: DINP (32.7%)  
Organotins (5,404 ppm of tin)  

Product: Shower Curtain Liner  
Brand: Royal Crest Home Products  
Distributor: Royal Crest Home Products  
UPC Code: 748209010054  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern:  
PVC (263,350 ppm of chlorine)  
Phthalates: DEHP (18.2%)  

Product: Indoor 9FT Appliance Cord  
Brand: Living Solutions  
Distributor: Walgreen Co.  
UPC Code: 49022702950  
Made in China  
Chemicals of concern:  
BFRs (11,104 ppm of bromine), PVC (166,515 ppm of chlorine), Phthalates: >1% regulated phthalates  

Products Tested

For this study, HealthyStuff.org purchased 44 products from Walgreens (Ann Arbor, Michigan) between January and March of 2014. The types of products tested included household, kitchen, bathroom and school supplies, cleaning materials (such as gloves), pet toys and children's products. Several of these products are distributed by Walgreens through the brands Living Solutions, Nice!, Pets Shoppe and Studio 35.

HealthyStuff.org is a project of the Ecology Center, a Michigan-based, nonprofit, environmental organization that works at the local, state, and national levels for clean production, healthy communities, environmental justice, and a sustainable future. HealthyStuff.org ratings do not provide a measure of health risk or chemical exposure associated with any individual product, or any individual element or related chemical.