What are Phthalates?

Phthalates are a class of chemicals commonly found in a range of consumer products, including household products, personal care products and cosmetics. Phthalates have been linked to cancer, endocrine disruption, and reproductive/developmental toxicity.

Where are Phthalates Found?

Phthalates are used as plasticizers to make plastic products more flexible or durable. Plastic products such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC), shower curtains, plastic food wrap, and flooring, can contain phthalates along with paints, cosmetics, fragranced lotions, body washes, hair care products, nail polish and more. Federal law allows for fragrance to be listed as an ingredient of personal care products without disclosure of the exact substances contained such as phthalates.

For a safer option, look for products that do not include this chemical. Read labels and avoid products that contain these toxic ingredients: phthalate, DEP, DBP, DEHP, fragrance.

Why are Phthalates Concerning?

Some phthalates are considered possibly carcinogenic to humans by the International Agency For Research on Cancer (IARC) and reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen by the National Toxicology Program (NTP).

Many phthalates remain understudied regarding their toxic effects in humans.

Where can I find more information about Phthalates?

To learn more about this hazardous chemical, please visit the following organization’s websites:

Scientific Government Resources:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Phthalates Factsheet

Consumer Support Information:
- Environmental Working Group: Cheatsheet: Phthalates
- Campaign for Safe Cosmetics: Phthalates

NOTE: All links for additional information are trusted sources. If you would not to know more, or have questions, please contact us at info@CENSWPA.org.