



WWF

**CHEMICALS AND HEALTH
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**



HAZARDOUS MAN-MADE CHEMICALS ARE ENDANGERING LIFE ON EARTH

Along with wildlife around the world, we are all being subjected to an uncontrolled global experiment. Exposure to man-made chemicals that remain in the environment, build up in our bodies, and interfere with our hormone systems, is putting life on Earth at risk. Let's put an end to this toxic threat.

In this leaflet, find out more about the problem, what WWF is doing, and what you can do to help.

Up to 300 man-made chemicals have been found in the bodies of humans. Babies are now born with man-made chemicals in their bodies – passed on from their mother. Some of these chemicals, if present in high enough levels, can affect the development of our children.



J. SIMON / DIGITAL VISION



F. PIERRELL / WWF-CANON

MAN-MADE TOXIC CHEMICALS ARE INSIDE ALL OF US – AND ARE CONTAMINATING WILDLIFE IN THE WORLD'S REMOTEST REGIONS

- ✘ The European Union has admitted that 99 per cent of the volume of chemicals on the market are inadequately regulated.
- ✘ Fish in our rivers and estuaries, such as flounder and roach, are being affected by effluents containing natural hormones and man-made chemicals. Male fish have been found with female sexual characteristics - in the worst cases they have been found growing infertile eggs in their testes.
- ✘ Female whelks in the sea are growing penises as a result of man-made chemicals, and many other species have also had their reproductive systems affected.
- ✘ Safety information on 20 per cent of the most highly used chemicals has either never been collected or is not publicly available.
- ✘ Toxic man-made chemicals are causing a decline in wildlife numbers – the Florida panther and alligators are threatened by an increasing incidence of genital deformities and infertility.



WITH YOUR HELP WWF CAN BEGIN TO STOP THIS TOXIC THREAT

Beluga whales found in the St Lawrence river in the United States were so highly contaminated that their bodies had to be treated as hazardous waste. These chemicals reach everywhere, and are now found in all living things – part of an unregulated global experiment.



K. SCHAEFER / STILL PICTURES

R. CHAPMAN / WWF-UK



Recent studies show that toxic chemicals are reducing polar bears' resistance to infections. Females pass on toxics during suckling, so that cubs are particularly at risk and their survival may be affected. Genital deformities have also been reported in polar bears, resulting in a condition termed "pseudo-hermaphroditism".

M. BAE, WWF-UK



When the use of DDT was banned by the government in 1976, peregrine falcon numbers rose. They had been feeding on pigeons which in turn had fed on crops sprayed with the chemical. With direct action, we can still conserve threatened species today.

H. CLARK, WWF-UK



Around the coast of the UK, man-made chemicals are affecting our best-known wildlife. Mammals such as harbour porpoises and North Sea seals have impaired immune systems caused by industrial chemicals. Some scientists believe this was a factor in the recent large-scale seal deaths in the North Sea.

J. VAN DE KAMP, WWF-CANADA



Food tins



Feeding Bottles

ALL PRODUCT SHOTS, EXCEPT WHERE INDICATED: J. DANIELS, WWF-UK



Food Wrap

Hazardous man-made chemicals can be found in hundreds of household products that we use every day. **Find out how to reduce your risk of exposure to harmful chemicals at home** – visit the Chemicals and Health Campaign website or call our information hotline.



Air Fresheners



Soft Furnishings



TVs and Computers



Fresh Fruit

WE DEMAND A SAFER FUTURE

In the 1940s a new man-made pesticide called DDT was used on crops in the UK. In 1976 it was banned after direct links were made between its use on crops and plummeting numbers of peregrine falcons. Since then, the UK's falcon population has risen by more than 300 per cent to the highest recorded levels. Disturbingly, a recent study has also shown that DDT may have accounted for 15 per cent of human infant deaths in the US during the 1960s.



More recently, the European Union has banned a flame retardant used in sofas and soft furnishings because alarmingly high levels of the chemical were found in human breast milk. WWF believes there are still many harmful chemicals out there that must be banned.



In many respects, chemicals have done mankind a power of good. But hazardous man-made chemicals, found in many household items such as carpets and televisions, are a global problem – when released they are free to travel anywhere and pose a real threat to people and wildlife.

WWF, the global environment network, is deeply concerned about the effects these chemicals are having on wildlife and humans, and is campaigning for certain hazardous chemicals to be banned. There are safer alternatives for many of these chemicals, but they are not being used.

WWF believes that products made from safer chemical substitutes will create a new market that will help to secure jobs - and the use of healthier alternatives won't contaminate wildlife and our children.

We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to end the unnecessary use of hazardous chemicals. The European Union is currently debating whether to ban long-lasting chemicals that build up in body fat and may, in future, be found to cause harmful effects.

THE EU NEEDS TO HEAR YOUR VOICE



WHAT IS WWF DOING?

The Chemicals and Health Campaign is part of WWF's global campaign to ban hazardous chemicals. WWF is the most respected not-for-profit organisation working on chemicals policy in Europe. Our campaign is revealing the extent of the contamination and exposing the risks of using certain man-made chemicals. As well as taking the case directly to the European Union, we are also lobbying governments in Westminster, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to take urgent action to ban these chemicals.

WWF is calling for hazardous man-made chemicals to be properly regulated – replaced where safer alternatives exist, or banned where necessary.

Chemicals that concern WWF include those that are **very persistent and very bioaccumulative** (long-lasting chemicals that build up in our bodies and in wildlife) and **hormone disrupting chemicals** (substances that can hijack normal biological processes and may cause neurological, behavioural, developmental or sexual defects).

Research has shown that a man-made chemical called Bisphenol A can leak from plastic baby bottles into the liquid inside. Bisphenol A can mimic the female hormone, oestrogen, and is therefore a hormone disrupting or "gender-bender" chemical. We don't know that babies are being damaged, but in the European Union, WWF has campaigned for precautionary action to eliminate our exposure to this chemical.



TAKE ACTION NOW



OR



VISIT OUR CAMPAIGN WEBSITE
www.wwf.org.uk/chemicals

CALL OUR CAMPAIGN HOTLINE
01483 860869

Find out how to:

1 SIGN OUR PETITION

WWF is petitioning the European Parliament to phase out hazardous chemicals. Make your voice heard by signing the petition, either online, or by requesting a petition sheet and instructions from the campaign hotline.

2 WRITE TO YOUR PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVE

Politicians really value personal letters from their constituents. Write to your MEP, and your MP, MSP or AM, urging them to sign WWF's Parliamentary Pledge in support of the campaign. Step by step instructions are available from the hotline or online.

3 REDUCE YOUR RISK OF CHEMICAL EXPOSURE

WWF has produced a handy guide to avoiding exposure to hazardous chemicals in your home. **CHEMICALS AND HEALTH IN THE HOME** is downloadable from the website or available **FREE** from our campaign hotline.

4 SUPPORT WWF'S CAMPAIGN

WWF relies on the generosity and support of its members and supporters. To join WWF, become a volunteer or make a donation, log on to www.wwf.org.uk or call the hotline for details.



R.CHAPMAN, WWF-UK

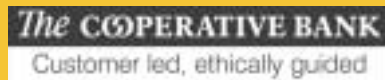
CAMPAIGNING TOGETHER

WWF has joined forces with two campaign partners, the Women's Institute and The Co-operative Bank.



The WI has been campaigning since 1918 for a safer environment for people and wildlife. As the largest women's organisation in England and Wales, it is working for a safer future for our children and grandchildren.

www.womens-institute.co.uk



www.co-operativebank.co.uk/cwc

The Co-operative Bank is renowned not only for an ethical approach to investing its customers' money, but also for active campaigning. Through its Customers Who Care campaign, the bank is calling for the phase-out of persistent and bioaccumulative chemicals that are linked to long-term health concerns or that contaminate the environment.

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The mission of WWF – the global environment network – is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

www.wwf.org.uk

