

# FLAME RETARDANTS | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## 1 Possible sources of exposure

- Food (fish, meat, and dairy products)
- Contaminated breast milk
- Transplacental transfer
- Occupational exposure (firefighters, electronics repair and recycling, carpet installation)
- Indoor air and dust due to the use of flame retarded products such as:
  - Electronics and electrical devices
  - Transportation products
  - Insulation
  - Furnishings
  - Baby and children's products (carseats, crib mattresses, changing pads, and some toys)

## 2 How can flame retardants enter your body?

Via ingestion

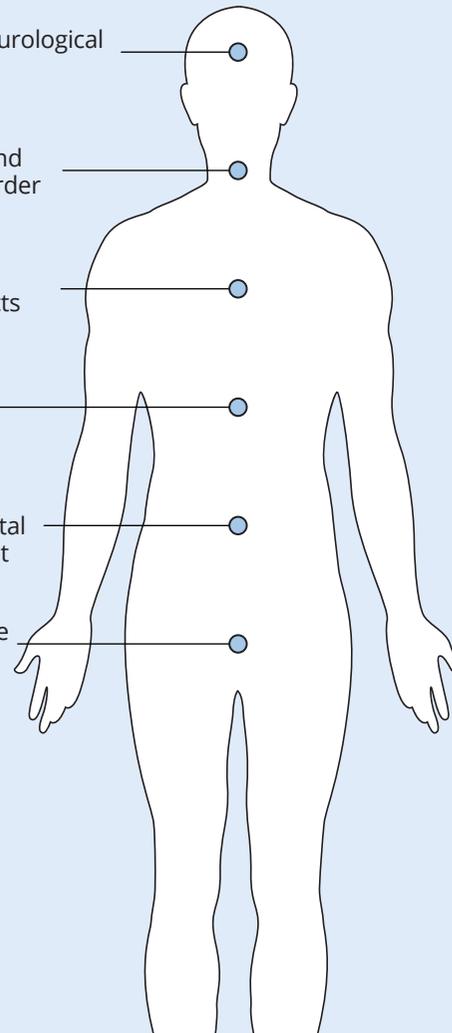
Via maternal transfer

Via inhalation

Via ingestion, dermal contact, inhalation

## 3 How might flame retardants affect your health?

- Impaired neurological function
- Endocrine and thyroid disorder
- Immune system effects
- Cancer
- Adverse effects on fetal development
- Reproductive toxicity



## 4 How can you reduce your exposure to flame retardants?

- Keep household dust levels down, by wet mopping and vacuuming with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter
- Wash your hands often
- Try to purchase baby products and wooden furniture filled with cotton, polyester, or wool, instead of polyurethane foam
- Ventilate your house properly to reduce dust
- Use a minimum of carpeting and draperies
- Look for furniture labelled "Flame Retardant Free" or "Free of Halogenated Flame Retardants"

## Where can they possibly be found?

Flame retardants can be found in food including fish, meat and dairy products, as well as other items such as furniture, carpets, curtains and other textiles, paints, food packaging, surfboards, home insulation materials, mattresses, carpets, curtains, appliances, electronics (laptops, televisions, phones, cables, wires, and circuit boards), car seats, overhead compartments and other automotive parts, many baby and children's products including toys.

The European Union has taken measures to prevent citizen exposure to some hazardous flame retardants, as well as to reduce exposure to others by restricting and/or banning some and regulating them under the various EU chemicals and food legislations.

For further information on how the European Union is protecting citizens read the **HBM4EU Flame Retardants Factsheet**.