

YOUR CLOTHING

TOXIC CLOTHING

In September 2016, American Airlines rolled out new uniforms for more than 70,000 employees — the first uniform overhaul in 30 years. Soon after, reports started coming in from about 100 pilots and 3,000 flight attendants that the uniforms were making them sick. A variety of symptoms were reported (some occurring only while the personnel were wearing the uniforms), such as rashes, itching, eye swelling and a general feeling of malaise.

Twin Hill, a unit of Tailored Brands Inc., which supplied the uniforms, has conducted testing, with nothing suspicious showing up that may cause the symptoms, and so far American Airlines has not recalled the uniforms, although they've given some employees alternative pieces and allowed them to wear their old uniforms while the matter is sorted out. While this may seem like an unusual story, it's not unheard of for clothing to make people sick.

In fact, the average piece of clothing not only may be made from potentially allergenic materials such as (Latex, Lycra or Spandex) but also may be contaminated with a variety of chemicals used during the manufacturing process.

The clothing industry is actually one of the most polluting industries on the planet, and the textiles they produce may be laced with irritants and disease-causing chemicals, which is one of the reasons it's so important to wash new clothes before wearing them. Even then, however, it may not make the clothing entirely safe.

WHAT KINDS OF CHEMICALS ARE IN YOUR CLOTHES?

Depending on where your new clothes were manufactured, they may contain multiple chemicals of concern. Among them are azo-aniline dyes, which may cause skin reactions ranging from mild to severe. If you're sensitive, such dyes may leave your skin red, itchy and dry, especially where the fabric rubs on your skin, such as at your waist, neck, armpits and thighs. The irritants can be mostly washed out, but it might take multiple washings to do so.

Formaldehyde resins are also used in clothing to cut down on wrinkling and mildew. Not only is formaldehyde a known carcinogen, but the resins have been linked to eczema and may cause your skin to become flaky or erupt in a rash. Nonylphenol ethoxylate (NPE), meanwhile, is toxic endocrine-disrupting surfactant used to manufacture clothing.

You certainly don't want to be exposed to NPE if you can help it, but when consumers wash their clothes, NPEs are released into local water supplies, where wastewater

treatment plants are unable to remove them. When NPEs enter the environment, they break down into nonylphenol (NP), a toxic, endocrine-disrupting chemical that accumulates in sediments and builds up in fish and wildlife. “Clean-fashion pioneer” Marci Zaroff, outlined some of the common chemicals likely to be found in your clothing:

Glyphosate, the number one agricultural chemical, is a herbicide used to grow cotton. It’s linked to cancer and found in cotton textiles.

Chlorine bleach, used for whitening and stain removal, may cause asthma and respiratory problems and is found in fiber/cotton processing, including denim.

Carcinogenic Formaldehyde is used to create wrinkle-free clothing as well as for shrinkage and as a carrier for dyes and prints. It’s common in cotton and other natural fabrics, including anything that’s been dyed or printed.

VOCs, solvents used for printing and other purposes, are common in finished textiles, especially those with prints. VOCs may off-gas from clothing, posing risks such as developmental and reproductive damage, liver problems and in some cases cancer, particularly to workers.

PFCs, used widely in uniforms and outdoor clothing to create stain-repellant and water-resistant fabrics, are carcinogenic, build up in your body and are toxic to the environment.

Brominated flame-retardants, are used to prevent clothes from burning, may be found in children’s clothing. These chemicals are neurotoxic endocrine disrupters that may cause cancer.

Ammonia, used to provide shrink resistance, is found in natural fabrics. It may be absorbed into your lungs and cause burning in your eyes, nose or throat.

Heavy metals, including lead, cadmium, chromium and others, may be used for leather tanning and dyeing. They’re highly toxic and may be found in finished textiles, especially those that are dyed or printed.

Phthalates/Plastisol, used in printing inks and other processes, are known endocrine disrupters.

The magnitude and multitude of toxic chemicals in the fashion and textile industries is out of control. Even though some carcinogens are regulated (for example, Formaldehyde, linked to cancer, is regulated in the U.S.), most brands are still manufactured overseas, where regulation is far behind. And only the most toxic chemicals are regulated in the U.S., which means there are a huge number that are unregulated but likely to cause allergic reactions.

This is an issue both for the people who wear the clothes as well as the environment. Textile dyeing facilities, for example, tend to be located in developing countries where regulations are lax and labour costs are low. Untreated or minimally treated wastewater is typically discharged into nearby rivers, from where it spreads into seas and oceans, traveling across the globe with the current.

An estimated 40 percent of textile chemicals are discharged by China. According to Ecowatch, Indonesia is also struggling with the chemical fallout of the garment industry. The Citarum River is now one of the most heavily polluted rivers in the world, thanks to the hundreds of textile factories along its shorelines. Clothing designer Eileen Fisher even called the clothing industry the “second largest polluter in the world ... second only to oil.”

We recommend only time-tested traditional natural fabrics: wool, cotton, leather, hemp linen, silk, flax,, coir, alpaca, angora, camel hair, cashmere, mohair, ramie, bamboo.

ALWAYS AVOID POLYESTER!

BRAS

Bras Cause Cancer

Is it possible that wearing a bra can actually cause cancer? Studies show that this is a very real possibility. The reason is that bras prevent lymph drainage and circulation.

The lymphatic and circulatory systems are responsible for both delivering vital nutrients and clearing out toxins. When the body does not have access to nutrients or when it is under the attack of toxins, cancer may develop.

A study published in the European Journal of Cancer examined factors for breast cancer, such as breast size and handedness. They discovered that premenopausal women who do not wear bras are less than half as likely to get breast cancer that those who regularly wear a bra. A study conducted by researcher David Moth revealed that even the lightest bras place pressure on the lymphatic system.

Other research published in Chronobiology International in 2000 discovered that regular bra wearing decreases the production of melatonin, which is a potent natural antioxidant and the hormone that regulates sleep, boosts the immune system and, fights ageing. Balanced melatonin levels are essential for the body to fight many types of cancer, including breast cancer.

Researchers Singer and Grismaijer observed 4,500 women and their bra-wearing practices. An amazing 76% of women who wore their bras 24 hours per day developed breast cancer. Women who wore their bras 12-16 hours per day had a 14% chance of getting breast cancer. Less than 1% of women who wore their bra less than 12 hours a day got breast cancer, and even fewer women who rarely or never wear a bra developed breast cancer.

The same researchers studied the indigenous populations of New Zealand and Australia. Maoris are fully integrated into mainstream New Zealand life, and, interestingly, equal Caucasians in their likelihood of developing breast cancer. Many Australian aboriginal women, on the other hand have not completely integrated into Western society and do not regularly wear bras, and have a lower rate of breast cancer. Japanese, Fijians, and many women from other cultures were found to have a significantly higher chance of developing breast cancer when they began wearing bras.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Shopping Centres Can Be Hazardous to Your Health by Elaine Hollingsworth

Last week I was poisoned at Robina Town Centre. Admittedly, the word “poisoned” may be a bit over the top, but not much. I arrived there feeling fine, and within 30 minutes I felt slightly ill. In an hour I felt much worse, and after an hour and a half breathing the chemicals in the air, I started to faint. Fortunately, there was someone there to catch me and help me to my car.

I would have complained to Robina Town Centre, or to some individual stores, but why bother? They have never answered any letters or phone calls I’ve made about the quality of their air, and I’ve made a few since 1995. I made the calls because nearly everyone who attended our centre told us that they had to limit their time in shopping centres, or stay out of them entirely, because of the bad air. Further, hundreds of persons in the many seminars I’ve given raised their hands when I asked if the air in shopping centres made them ill.

This is a scandal, and something needs to be done about it, for the sake of the people who work in the centres, day in, day out, breathing dangerous chemicals, many of which haven’t been properly tested, and some of which are well known to cause serious respiratory illnesses and cancer. For sceptics, there is abundant, persuasive scientific proof of these dangers in books written by prestigious scientists.

It’s clear that shopping centres are not going to do anything about this. But unions and government agencies can, and should, do something to protect people from dangers in the workplace. We customers have a choice – we can elect to shop in safe places, but shopping centre workers are economic captives!

Please let us know if spending time in a shopping centre leaves you feeling foggy-headed, dizzy and generally unwell, as so many people have reported to us.