

Skin has many protective properties,
but when it comes to certain chemicals . . .

Your child's skin



A baby's or young child's delicate skin can absorb potentially harmful chemicals from **everyday products**, such as insect repellents, sunscreens, lotions and diaper creams. The developing fetus can also be exposed to chemicals in cosmetics and other products used on the mother's skin during pregnancy.

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» **Avoid products containing "fragrance."** Fragrances are made from a variety of chemicals, some of which have known health impacts. Many fragrances contain phthalates, chemical additives linked to hormonal effects and worsening of allergies and asthma.

» **Do not use antibacterial soaps or other products.** According to the Canadian Medical Association, use of these products may cause germs to become more resistant to antibiotics. Antibacterial (or "antimicrobial") products also often contain triclosan, a chemical suspected of disrupting normal hormone function.

» **Be aware that cosmetics, temporary tattoos and face and body paints** may contain chemicals that are harmful or that have not been confirmed as safe for use on children. Use these products only occasionally (and never on babies) and be sure to wash them off completely with plain soap and warm water.

When deciding on skin care products for babies, children and pregnant women . . .

Choose wisely. Use wisely.

» **Choose Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA)-approved sunscreens that contain reflecting physical blockers** such as titanium dioxide. Avoid those with chemical blockers, such as oxybenzone or octyl methoxycinnamate. To play it safe, write to companies to find out if the sunscreens you choose contain nanoparticles — ultra-small particles that may be absorbed through the skin. And instead of relying only on sunscreen, find ways to minimize sun exposure: sunhats, long sleeves and playing in the shade are great options.

» **Select only insect repellents specifically intended for children and that bear a Health Canada "PCP" number. Always follow label instructions carefully.** To minimize the need for chemical repellents, encourage children to wear protective clothing (hats, long sleeves, pants and socks) and stay indoors during peak biting times (dawn and dusk).

» **Avoid using insect repellent and sunscreen on babies** until they are at least six months of age.

For more environmental
childproofing tips, visit

[www.healthy
environment
forkids.ca](http://www.healthyenvironmentforkids.ca)

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