



## Sleeping with the Enemy

### Do you know what's in your mattress?

A recent article published on an independent, third-party health and fitness website reminded readers of a very real concern regarding conventional mattress materials. Titled "Is Your Mattress Slowly Killing You?", the piece highlighted the health hazard that exists wherever flame-retardant chemicals are found in consumer products.

Considering that most of us sleep on a mattress for several hours every night, few other items are as likely to physically transfer these chemicals to the user. It's an instance where the positive aspects must be weighed against the potential harm.

Every mattress sold in the United States since July 1, 2007 has been treated to make it highly resistant to catching fire...so much that even brief exposure to a blowtorch flame will not cause it to ignite.

That degree of fire resistance can only be achieved by saturating the mattress material with a chemical regarded as highly toxic: polybrominated diphenyl ether, also called PBDE.

Although its effectiveness as a flame-retardant is not disputed, PBDE has been shown to accumulate in the body after it has been absorbed through skin or inhaled. This compound is linked to brain and reproductive damage and other issues. Pregnant women may transfer stored PBDE to their fetuses.

Canada and much of Europe have banned PBDE use, but it's not the only flame retardant that is suspected of causing adverse effects. Some mattresses contain amounts of boric acid (a respiratory irritant), antimony or formaldehyde.

This has come to the attention of medical authorities including Doris Rapp, M.D. an environmental medical specialist and pediatric allergist. Dr. Rapp says of these treated mattress products: [Manufacturers] maybe a cup and a half or two cups of this material on the mattress. They sprinkle it over the top or they put it into some kind of a coating on the mattress. And this can make people very, very ill."

What can be done to help safeguard sleepers against this danger? There are some alternatives. One is to avoid mattresses altogether and sleep on the floor, but not many would be willing to sacrifice comfort to that extent. (that's not very conducive to restful sleep, either.)

Another is to seek an organic, naturally flame-resistant mattress. The problem there is two-fold: the few examples of these that are offered are exorbitantly priced, and not all of them are as organic and chemical-free as they may claim.

The Nikken Kenko Sleep System is a better solution. The Kenko Naturest® Mattress Topper can be placed on an ordinary bed and prevent direct contact between the mattress and the sleeper. Naturest is made of pure, natural latex, and the natural-fiber cover is organic. It's naturally flame retardant, so it meets the flammability-resistance standard without additives.

Sleep is essential for your good health. It makes sense for your sleep environment to support the same objective.

**PROBLEM!**

**SOLUTION!**