

# HAZARDS OF MATTRESSES

CHELSEA YOUNG

Throughout the years, my family and myself have paid unwavering attention to the amount of chemicals we use on a daily basis that may be extremely damaging to our health. These chemicals we have researched and eliminated include those found within body care products, household cleaners, air fresheners, detergents, and obviously our food and healthcare supplement products. We have chosen to use non-toxic, immune-supporting products, thus nurturing the body from the inside-out. From doing so, I have not taken an over-the-counter medication in nearly 18 years. Sharing the relationship that toxic chemicals undoubtedly have on human health from my own personal experience, is my passion and I believe my true calling in this lifetime. I have skimmed over the notion within my mind, of other chemicals that are perhaps still lurking within the home after years of elimination, however I have never truly entertained it. Surely those products that we physically pick up to use on a daily basis have been at the forefront of my concern, but what if there are other chemicals we are 'using' day-in and day-out, without even knowing it, that are just as damaging to our health and well-being? Let's say, an item that is concealed and deemed as a comfortable, relaxing, sanctuary; What chemicals are lurking within our, mattress?

As a full-time Young Living business owner, I work right from home. My office is found in virtually every corner of the house. I sleep-in whenever I feel I am in need of a few extra hours of beauty and brain rest. Some days I begin with having my laptop on the bed, in my lap, answering emails, checking on my Young Living team members, posting to my Young Living social media accounts, and so forth. So, we are told that we spend 1/3 of our time within our beds sleeping. For me, working from home, tack on another 3 hours here and there, to the already 8 hours I was laying on my mattress for the day. Our faces and bodies are pressed tightly against our mattresses. Some sleep face-first, such as many children. Children spend even more time sleeping than adults on average. Not to mention, they play on their beds, jumping up and down, allowing whatever toxins mattresses withhold, to be compressed and then released into

the air. So what IS it that I am actually laying on top of for sometimes almost half of my day? What is it that children are playing on? What are our mattresses actually created from? This thought has never before really crossed my mind.

I own a Tempur-Pedic mattress. Tempur-Pedic is known to be a high-quality, extremely comfortable mattress. Mine was even given the name, "The Cloud", because of how light and fluffy the memory foam feels and contours to the body. What my research found of the volatile organic compounds memory foam mattresses emit, and every other mattress for that matter, has me now wanting to ditch my "cloud" and sleep on my bedroom floor. Note: there are immune-building VOCs, such as essential oils. However, VOCs released by synthetically created chemicals are found to be immune-suppressing.

Memory foam, and other types of mattresses as well, are loaded with synthetic materials, some of those having the potential to be very toxic to one's health. These chemicals, when leached and inhaled into our all-natural bodies, have the ability to cause minor health ailments such skin irritation and respiratory problems to incur more serious health risks including asthma, allergies, nervous-system disorders, and cancers of the lung, nose, and throat. What exactly are these toxic chemicals found within mattresses? First, is polyurethane foam. This is a material that is petroleum based, and creates what is known as off-gassing, aka the leaching of VOCs into the air. Formaldehyde is another chemical found. It is an adhesive that holds mattresses together. According to the National Cancer Institute, formaldehyde has been classified as a known human carcinogen. Furthermore, there are cotton pesticides and flame-retardant chemicals found within mattresses. Flame-retardants have been linked to neurodevelopmental delays in children, decreased fertility, thyroid problems, and more. To drive this in deeper, in one study in 2005, "Walter Bader, owner of the 'green mattress' company Lifekind and author of the book *Toxic Bedrooms*, sent several mattresses to an Atlanta-based lab. A memory-foam model was found to emit 61 chemicals, including the carcinogens benzene and naphthalene." In a more recent study conducted by a team of environmental engineers from the Cockrell School of Engineering on the levels of chemicals emitted from crib mattresses they concluded, "1. New crib mattresses release about four times as many VOCs as old crib mattresses. 2. Body heat

increases emissions. 3. Chemical emissions are strongest in the sleeping infant's immediate breathing zone."

Unfortunately, tracking the long-term health effects is almost impossible. Fortunately, there are a few different options one can take to limit their exposure to their mattress' hidden health harms. First, sleep on the floor. Okay, that was a bad joke. First, the easiest and most basic measure to take, keep your home as dust-free as possible. "Household dust is more akin to a chemical cocktail that you inhale and ingest on a daily basis," stated Dr. Mercola. Furthermore he reported, "Researchers from the Silent Spring Institute tested household dust for 49 flame retardant chemicals. Forty-four were found in all, and half of the samples contained 36 of them, sometimes at potentially harmful levels." With that, clean with Thieves Household Cleaner. It contains the Young Living Thieves essential oil blend, having a 99.96% kill rate of airborne bacteria. Second, seek out and make a well-informed investment into a mattress created of natural latex, organic cotton batting, and organic wool. Look for a mattress that uses Kevlar, which is relatable to being bullet-proof, instead of a mattress that contains flame-retardants. These mattresses may be more expensive, beginning at \$600+. However, you simply cannot put a price on your health, and for an item you use 1/3 of your lifetime spent on, it is an amazing long-term health investment indeed. If purchasing a new organic mattress is out of your current price range, purchase an organic topper(s) in the meantime. That way you are sleeping 4-7" above your mattress, lessening your exposure to those harmful toxins. The price range of organic toppers begins as low as \$30, and they can cost as much as \$900. The thicker the topper is, the more expensive it will be. That is what I plan to do, immediately. Remember, just because a mattress states it is organic, does not mean it is non-toxic. So please, do the needed research to ensure you are investing in the best quality for your health. Moreover, indoor air can be 2-5 times more polluted than outdoor air. With these VOCs within the air, diffuse essential oils on a daily basis. Essential oils have been found to reduce the amount of airborne chemicals and metallics, as they contain anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-septic properties (EODR). My personal favorites include Thieves, Purification, and Lemongrass. You can also look into purchasing a home air-purifier to future create a toxin-free home. These fall within the \$300-\$800 price range.

I cannot wait to dive in and do more research on basic every day items found within the home that may also contain harmful chemicals. Toxins truly are everywhere. If little by little, you

eliminate your exposure to the bad, and implement the non-toxic, chemical-free good, your body and health will thank you. Your health is your greatest commodity, and you were only given one body. Treat it as the temple that it truly is.

Chelsea Young

#### References Used:

1. <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2008/03/should-you-ditch-your-chemical-mattress>
2. <http://www.healthychild.com/prevent-toxic-off-gassing-when-you-cant-afford-to-buy-an-organic-mattress/>
3. <http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2012/12/27/flame-retardant-chemicals.aspx>
4. <http://www.cancer.gov>
5. <http://www.naturesmoldrx.com/2013/08/what-are-vocs-should-i-be-concerned.html>
6. <http://www.utexas.edu/news/2014/04/02/crib-mattresses-emit-chemicals/>