

RACHEL'S FRIENDS

BREAST CANCER COALITION

Children's Bath Products Contaminated with Formaldehyde, 1,4-Dioxane

Dozens of children's bath products are contaminated with the cancer-causing chemicals formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane, according to test results released in March 2009 by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. **The chemicals were not disclosed on product labels because contaminants are exempt from U.S. labeling laws.**

Many products tested for this study contained both formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane. Formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane are known to cause cancer in animals and are

listed as **probable human carcinogens** by the Environmental Protection Agency.

No regulations limit formaldehyde, 1,4-dioxane or most other toxic chemicals in personal care products sold in the U.S. Other nations have stricter standards. Formaldehyde is banned from personal care products in Japan and Sweden. The European Union bans 1,4-dioxane from personal care products.

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics commissioned an independent laboratory to test 48 top-selling children's

products for 1,4-dioxane; 28 of those products were also tested for formaldehyde. The lab found that:

- **61 percent contained both formaldehyde and 1,4-dioxane**, including Johnson's Baby Shampoo and Sesame Street Bubble Bath.
- **82 percent contained formaldehyde.** Baby Magic Baby Lotion had the highest levels.
- **67 percent contained 1,4-dioxane.** American Girl shower products had the highest levels.

(Continued on page 2)

We endorse five Oregon bills — and oppose one

We encourage you to call or e-mail your Oregon state senator and representative. Find your state and federal legislators at <http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/>

Tell the legislator or his/her aide that you're a voter in their district and you support (or oppose fluoridation) these public health bills that would reduce exposures to toxic chemicals and help identify cancer clusters in Oregon.

Children's Safe Products Act, House Bills (HB) 2367, 2792. Protect

children from toxic chemicals in toys, baby bottles, and other products by banning specific dangerous chemicals and providing information on safer buying choices.

www.oeonline.org/our-work/smart-policy/children2019s-safe-product-act-of-2009



Oregon Healthy Schools Act. www.oeonline.org/our-work/smart-policy/the-oregon-healthy-schools-act

- use green cleaning products, Senate Bill **(SB 668)**
- use Integrated Pest Management **(SB 637)**
- repair or replace diesel school buses **(HB 2795)**
- use green building construction in schools, remodels, and capital improvement projects **(HB 3357)**

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Children's bath products

"There is absolutely no reason why manufacturers can't remove hazardous chemicals in products being applied to babies' bodies every day," said Jeanne Rizzo, R.N., president of the Breast Cancer Fund. "Children are exposed to toxic chemicals from many sources. We need to protect them from. . . repeated, unnecessary exposures."

Devra Lee Davis, Ph.D., M.P.H., professor of epide-

(Continued from page 1)
Endorsements

Birth Anomaly (Defect) Registry, SB 460. Would establish a birth anomaly registry to track birth date, birth place, and types of birth anomalies in Oregon. Data could reveal cancer clusters. <http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/sb0400.dir/sb0460.intro.pdf>

Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan, HB 2544, would make Oregon eligible to receive grant funds through the federal No Child Left Inside Act, **but only if an Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan exists.** http://www.eeao.org/adv_background.aspx

Product Stewardship, HB 3060, would require manufacturers of some hazardous products, such as rechargeable batteries and lights with mercury, to submit a product recycling plan to

miology and director of the Center for Environmental Oncology at the University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute, said that **the usual regulatory approach of assessing risk one chemical at a time does not account for the combined effects of very low levels of contaminants in personal care products and from other sources.**

Find the report, "No More Toxic Tub" at

www.safecosmetics.org/toxictub

DEQ. Producers must take back their products at no cost when users recycle them.

<http://www.recyclingadvocates.org/newsletter/2009/RA%20newsletter%20March%202009.pdf>

We oppose this bill:

Mandatory fluoridation, HB 3156. Would require water suppliers serving more than 10,000 persons to add fluoride to water. Overrides local government regulations that prohibit or restrict use of fluoride.

<http://safewateroregon.org/fluoridation.html>

Special thanks to Shelly Caldwell and Toolbox Media, our new web host



Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition is a non-profit Oregon advocacy organization dedicated to lowering the incidence of breast and other cancers by reducing our exposure to environmental carcinogens. We do this through education, legislative action, and organizing for change on behalf of Oregonians.

We honor Rachel Carson, a biologist and writer who died of breast cancer. Her 1962 book *Silent Spring* exposed the dangers of pesticides.

We support the **Precautionary Principle (better safe than sorry)**. We should act **now** to reduce our exposure to known and suspected carcinogens even if cause and effect relationships are not firmly established.

Board of Directors

Diane Lund-Muzikant, Chair; Elizabeth Arledge, Melissa Brue; Nancy Crumpacker, MD; Phil Goldsmith; Karen Gritzka, RN; Caroline Skinner; Joanne Skirving

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Mary Ann Wish

Rita McDonagh

by Diane Lund-Muzikant

A very dear friend, Rita Clare McDonagh, succumbed to breast cancer on March 14 surrounded by family and close friends. For the past six years Rita was a board member of Rachel's Friends Breast Cancer Coalition. She excelled in tabling and outreach, from one-on-one conversations to several hundred people at an Oregon State University event. She served as board treasurer for one year. She fought cancer for 18 years.

Rita and I shared some very special moments. I'll never forget her gentle spirit, her humility, her passion for life.

Despite the cancer that raged inside her body, Rita believed we must focus our energy on the causes of this disease – not just the cure – by reducing our exposure to the environmental carcinogens that impact cancer.

As we hold Rita in our hearts and remember her courageous battle, Rachel's Friends calls on us to follow her lead in the fight against cancer. We owe it to Rita.

***April 26. Song Circle/
Party in Rita's memory.
See page 4.***

Is your shower curtain toxic?

Shower curtains made with polyvinyl chloride plastic (also called PVC or vinyl chloride) release harmful chemicals such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), phthalates, and organotins (hormone disruptors linked to obesity).

The total VOCs released by shower curtains in the Center for Health, Environment and Justice study was over 16 times greater than the recommended guidelines for indoor air quality set by the U.S. Green Building Council.

The U.S. EPA classifies



photo by Stacy Vaeth

vinyl chloride as a known human carcinogen. It can damage the liver and central nervous system, causing a rare form of liver cancer.

When PVC is manufactured or burned, dioxins are released. Dioxins are also

known human carcinogens that build up in the food chain. Besides causing cancer, they can harm human immune and reproductive systems.

Check out the report *Volatile Vinyl: The New Shower Curtain's Chemical Smell* at www.chej.org/showercurtainreport/.

We appreciate your donations. Thank you!

- From **Marjorie Kircher** in honor of **Barb Henriksen, Linda Huddle, and Melody Oakley**. "Rachel's Friends is unique in its focus on environmental toxic exposure as a contributor to cancers."
- From **Leslie McBride** in honor of **Abbie Crumpacker**

In memory of Rita McDonagh

- **Cheryl, Jennifer, Sierra, and Laurel Dotten**
- **Nadia Ewing, MD**, Pediatric Hemophilia & Sickle Cell, City of Hope, Duarte, CA, and Pediatric Hematology/Oncology, Huntington Hospital, Pasadena, CA
- **Karen Gritzka**
- **Myra Himmelfarb**
- **Diane Lund-Muzikant**
- **Joanne Skirving**

Rachel's Friends
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Be informed; get involved!

Tuesdays, April 7, 14, 21 and 28. Food For Life. Free cancer-related nutrition and cooking class. OHSU Center for Women's Health, Kohler Pavilion, 808 SW Campus Dr. 7th floor. Free parking. Register online at www.ohsuwomenshealth.com/classes/#life.

Learn about dairy alternatives, meat replacements, antioxidants, phytochemicals, and immune-boosting foods. Prepare meals loaded with high-fiber, low-fat foods. Weight maintenance and meal planning. 10-minute nutrition video and one-hour cooking demonstration and food sampling.

Saturday, April 25. Green cleaning class. 10 a.m. - noon. OR Center for Environmental Health. 4819 NE Fremont. \$10 OCEH members; \$15 non-members. Advance payment required. You'll make laundry detergent, all-purpose cleaner, and soft scrub for kitchen and bathroom. To register: jason@oregon-health.org or 503-233-1510 ext. 201.

Sunday, April 26. Song Circle/Party in memory of Rita McDonagh. 2 - 6 p.m., O'Connor's Vault (private room next door to the restaurant), 7850 SW Capitol Hwy., Portland.

Saturday, May 30. Breast Cancer Walk, Health & Wellness Expo. Free. 5k family walk, 10k run/walk, survivors' walk, lectures and classes, cooking demos. Esther Short Park, West Columbia & 8th, downtown Vancouver WA. Sponsored by Clara Jean Foundation. 503-810-9946. www.clarajeon.org

Saturday, Aug. 15. African-American Health Coalition Walk. N. Vancouver & Stanton, Portland. 8 a.m. Food, music, face painting. Proceeds support AAHC's free physical activity program. www.aahc-portland.org/events.htm