

# health News, trends, and fun finds matters



## Rest Assured

*Your nightly snooze* should be tranquil—not a health nightmare. Yet conventional mattresses can be laden with hazardous chemicals, including brominated fire retardants, linked to liver and thyroid toxicity and reproductive and brain-development problems. For a safer slumber, choose a natural mattress made with low-toxicity flame retardants, such as borates, and these nonsynthetic, nontoxic materials:

**ORGANIC COTTON.** Grown without pesticides, organic cotton is whitened with hydrogen peroxide rather than chlorine bleach, a carcinogen and lung irritant that also damages the environment. (For more on toxins, see page 59.)

**WOOL.** Because it doesn't retain moisture, wool discourages mold, mildew, and dust mites. Certified-organic wool comes from sheep not treated with toxic insecticides for ticks and lice. Ask for wool washed with vegetable soaps, not chemical detergents.

**NATURAL LATEX.** From rubber trees, all-natural latex is springy, hypoallergenic, and biodegradable. If you're latex sensitive (itchy skin, watery eyes), ask the retailer for a test sample. Legally, natural latex may be blended with synthetic rubber, so buy from a manufacturer that can document the content as "all natural."

—LAUREL KALLENBACH