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Hold The Toxins – CA Consumers Now Have A Choice

It will soon be a little easier for Californians to remove potentially toxic chemicals from their homes. A major manufacturer has announced its cleaning products will no longer contain phthalates, the controversial chemical that is sometimes used as a fragrance.

As part of National Poison Prevention Week, SC Johnson says it also will begin listing all ingredients on product labels, as well as on a company Web site and through a toll-free number.

Erin Switalski, program manager for the group *Women's Voices for the Earth*, says the move should make it easier for consumers to avoid chemicals that can trigger asthma, allergies and other serious health problems.

"They will be disclosing all of the ingredients they use in their products including dyes, preservatives and fragrance, which are huge categories of ingredients that no other company has wanted to disclose."

Companies are not required by law to disclose the ingredients they use, and the industry has claimed changing that policy would force companies to reveal trade secrets by providing their ingredient lists. That's simply not the case, says Switalski.

"When you're talking about making a cake, you still need to know how much of each ingredient is in that cake to make that recipe - but, you know, just having a list of the ingredients is not going to get you the same cake."

SC Johnson and other manufacturers continue to maintain their position that phthalates are harmless, although Switalski says the class of chemical has been linked to reproductive and developmental problems. More information is available online at www.womenandenvironment.org.

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