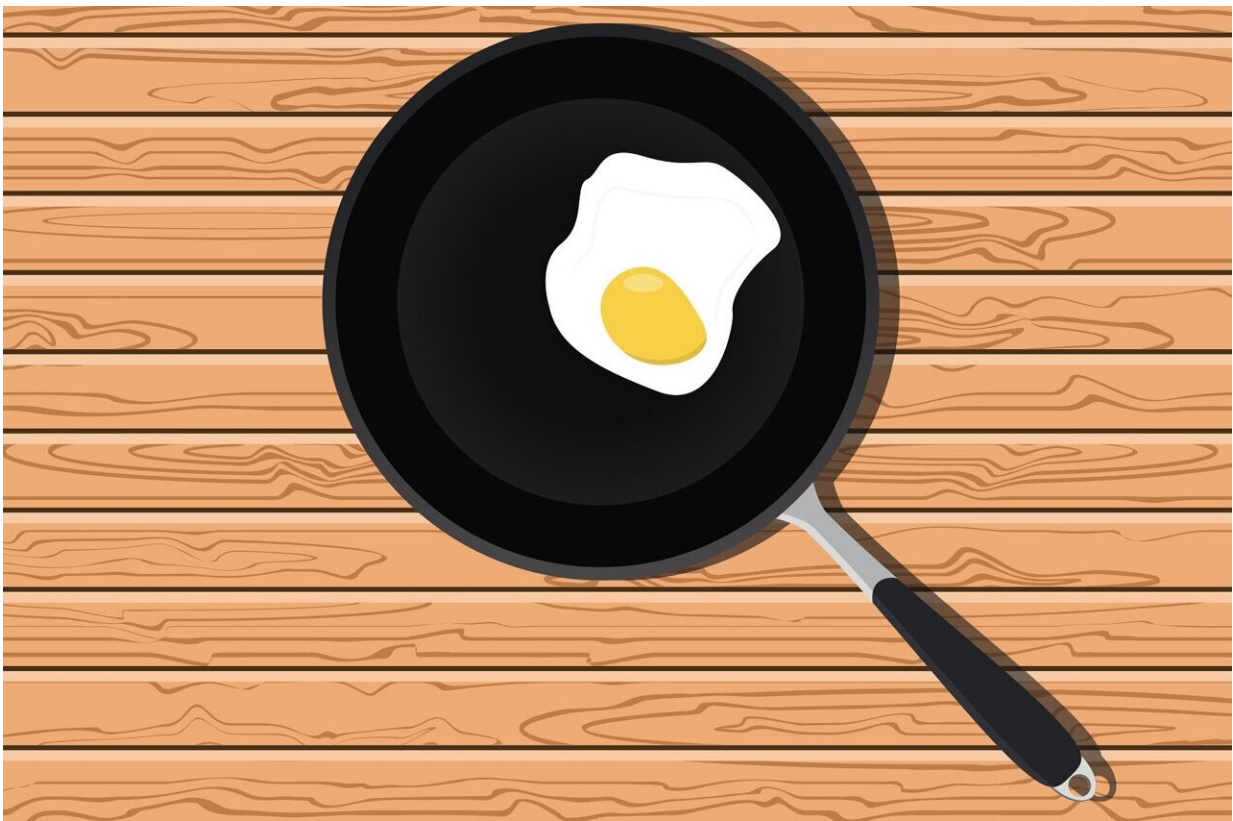


# Children's products labeled water- or stain-resistant may contain PFAS, study says

May 4 2022

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Seems like kids are always getting into something, so products marketed toward them often claim to repel liquids. Some items contain potentially harmful per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) to accomplish this

feat, but companies aren't required to disclose these "forever chemicals" on labels. Now, researchers reporting in *ACS' Environmental Science & Technology* show that some children's products advertised as water- or stain-resistant contain PFAS, even items labeled "green" or "nontoxic."

Exposure to PFAS through inhalation and ingestion has been linked to a number of health concerns, including decreased effectiveness of vaccines in children, cancers and high cholesterol, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But few studies have looked at potential PFAS exposures among kids and teens from the [products](#) they interact with. So, Laurel Schaidler and colleagues wanted to see whether these compounds were present in apparel, bedding and furnishings that are marketed to children or expected to be used by them.

The team's data revealed that 54 of the 93 items surveyed contained fluorine, an indicator of PFAS. Of the fluorine-containing products, 18 had measurable levels of at least one PFAS. A total of 19 had precursor compounds that can be transformed into highly stable perfluoroalkyl acids when oxidized in the environment or the human body. PFAS and their precursors were only found in items specifically labeled with trademarks for [water](#)- or stain-resistance, or that used similar wording, such as "waterproof", "stainproof" or "leak-proof." Some of these products also had green certifications or claimed to be nontoxic. The team explains that these results were not surprising because many certification processes don't include a check for PFAS, or they have higher acceptable limits than the levels found in this study. Overall, products marketed toward young consumers as water- or stain-resistant could contain PFAS, which the researchers say represents a nonessential use of these substances. They suggest that these substances be removed to protect [children](#)'s health.

**More information:** How Well Do Product Labels Indicate the

Presence of PFAS in Consumer Items Used by Children and Adolescents?, *Environmental Science & Technology* (2022). DOI: [10.1021/acs.est.1c05175](https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.1c05175)

Provided by American Chemical Society

Citation: Children's products labeled water- or stain-resistant may contain PFAS, study says (2022, May 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-children-products-water-stain-resistant-pfas.html>

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