

# Disease-causing chemicals in everyday products cost EU billions

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Disease-causing chemicals in everyday products from sunscreen to store receipts cost EU countries more than 30 billion euros in health costs, a study said on Wednesday.

According to a report by the Health and Environment Alliance, a leading activist group on EU health matters, hormone-disrupting chemicals are causing spiralling rates of disease and putting a dangerous strain on healthcare policies across the 28-country bloc.

"Exposure to food and everyday electronic, cosmetic and plastic products containing hormone disrupting chemicals may be costing up to 31 billion euros (\$42 billion) per year in the European Union," the alliance said in a statement.

It based the calculation on the cost of treating a list of diseases and conditions it said scientists had found to be related to hormone disorders.

These include cancer, obesity, fertility problems, and penis abnormalities in baby boys, it said.

The cost argument is the latest element in a push, led by France and Sweden, to incite the European Commission to meet a long-delayed commitment to identify the [dangerous chemicals](#).

Scientists are divided on the effects of these chemicals however, and the Commission, under intense pressure by the [chemicals industry](#) lobby, has

missed a December 2013 deadline to provide a comprehensive list of the potentially dangerous toxins.

Sweden has threatened to sue the Commission on the delay and France last week urged immediate action from EU ministers after unveiling a national strategy to replace the chemicals in retail products.

The [chemical industry](#) insists that more research is needed before setting any criteria, and has resisted calls for action.

Bisphenol A, found in plastics, is the most often targeted chemical and has already sparked bans on certain makes of baby feeding bottles.

But new research regularly identifies other chemicals. Last month, German and Danish scientists said chemical ingredients used in hygiene and consumer products interfere with male fertility by damaging sperm.

The chemicals included 4-methylbenzylidene camphor, an ultraviolet filter used in some sunscreens, and the anti-bacterial agent Triclosan, used in toothpaste.

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