

Johnson & Johnson kowtows to chemophobic activists

By ACSH Staff — August 16, 2012

We were more than a bit dismayed to learn that health care and consumer product giant Johnson & Johnson (J&J) [plans on removing](#) ^[1] a number of allegedly toxic chemicals from its line of consumer products. J&J, which also owns popular skin care brands such as Neutrogena, Aveeno, and Clean & Clear, has pledged to remove certain chemicals from its baby products by the end of 2013 and reformulate all adult products by the end of 2015.

For years, environmental and consumer groups such as the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics (CSC) have preyed on the public by insisting that the everyday products they use are dangerous. In addition, they've also been pressuring companies to remove certain ingredients from their formulations and now it looks as though J&J is the latest one to cave.

Although the company's baby shampoo, one of CSC's prominent [targets](#) ^[2], has been safely on the market for decades, J&J is nevertheless succumbing to the baseless allegations brought forth by these activist groups. And in reformulating their products, the company must now waste time and money developing suitable alternative ingredients the cost of which will no doubt be passed onto the consumer.

Susan Nettesheim, vice president for product stewardship and toxicology for the J&J consumer health brands, even concedes that, As a scientist, I will sit here and tell you these things are perfectly safe. So we would ask her, if your products are safe, what's going on? She adds, We are going beyond science.

Would that be some twilight zone of hyper-precaution? wonders ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. We are still disappointed that science did not prevail as J&J has demonstrated its commitment to activist hype, not its own scientists.

Organizations such as the Environmental Working Group have not only succeeded in scaring the public, but they are now scaring Fortune 500 companies as well, adds ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan. The chemicals in these products are there for a reason some, for example, protect against bacterial contamination. Now J&J has to spend millions of dollars testing new chemicals to find a replacement. And who says that the alternatives they find will be any more safe than the ingredients they already use?

There is no doubt that these consumer groups have an inordinate amount of power in these matters, says ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom. There is no scientific point of view here, just intimidation tactics. But it still works.

For more information on chemicals and cosmetics, check out ACSH's [publication](#) [3],
What's the Story? Health Claims Against Cosmetics: How Do They Look in the Light?

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[1] <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/16/business/johnson-johnson-to-remove-formaldehyde-from-products.html>

[2] http://www.acsh.org/factsfears/newsid.3139/news_detail.asp

[3] http://www.acsh.org/publications/pubID.1226/pub_detail.asp