



## Press Release

### **Mother's beware! Your baby's nappy is laden with toxic chemicals!**

**New Delhi, September 28, 2020:** If you are a doting as well as a discerning parent with a baby or toddler this is for you! A new study titled, **'What's in the Diaper: Presence of Phthalates in Baby Diapers'** released by Delhi-based advocacy organisation Toxics Link raises concern over toxic phthalates being found in disposable baby nappies that are available in the Indian market. Phthalates are endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and exposure to them is known to cause serious health impairments.

“The study found high levels of phthalates ranging from **2.36ppm to 302.25ppm**. The DEHP is the most toxic phthalate and is restricted or banned in several children products but was found between 2.36ppm to 264.94 ppm in the tested samples,” said Alka Dubey, Programme Coordinator at Toxics Link. For the study 20 diaper samples were randomly collected from local markets and chemist shops in Delhi; few samples were purchased from commonly used e-commerce platforms as well. All the samples were analysed in an NABL-accredited laboratory (Spectro Analytical Lab. Ltd. Okhla, New Delhi)

“Generally phthalates are non-covalently bound to polymers used in diapers; they are easily released from the diapers. As a diaper is in direct contact with the external genitals of infants and toddlers for several months to years, there is a possibility that phthalates can enter the bodies of babies through dermal absorption and can cause adverse health impacts on the children. Phthalates are recognised as endocrine disrupting chemicals which directly impact the endocrine systems and can be the cause for multiple ailments such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity and reproductive disorders. There are scientific studies confirming the dermal absorption of phthalates from the diapers”, stated Satish Sinha, Associate Director at Toxics Link. “Further these chemicals can leach out in the municipal waste stream and can pose serious challenges into the environment as well,” he reiterated.

“This is the first-of-its-kind study in India. Globally efforts have been made to phase out phthalates from various products and most importantly from children's products. India has also set the standards for five common phthalates (DEHP,



DBP, BBP, DIDP, DNOP & DINP) in various children's products. However, there is no such regulation in place for baby diapers in our country" said Piyush Mohapatra, Senior Programme Coordinator at Toxics Link. Some countries though have put restrictions on use of phthalates in baby diapers.

With this study labelling has also come out as a big concern, as none of the manufacturers of the tested samples have listed the ingredients and chemicals used for making the diapers. Manufacturers need to look into the issue and refrain from adding phthalates in diapers considering their health implications as well as environmental concerns. Further the government needs to take strict action to phase out phthalates from diapers with suitable regulations and to come up with some stringent measures for packaging and labelling of the products.

### **Key findings of the study**

- 40% of the samples were purchased from the local weekly market while 60% were well-known branded ones
- DEHP, DBP, DIBP, BBP and other phthalates were analyzed in the current study
- DEHP, DBP, BBP were detected in all analyzed samples
- The highest phthalate content reported was **302.25ppm**
- DEHP, the most toxic phthalate was observed in the range of **2.36ppm to 264.94ppm** in the analyzed samples
- DBP was found in the range of **2.35ppm to 37.31ppm** while the total phthalate content of diaper samples was between **8.2ppm to 302.25ppm**
- BBP was below detection limit or not detected in most samples except one where it was found to be **3.24ppm**
- DIBP was detected in three samples between **1.92 ppm to 12.36ppm**

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