

# SAFETY CHECKUP

## Consumer's Guide On Health Hazards Of Everyday Products Unveiled

(NAPSA)—What's under your kitchen sink, in your garage, in your bathroom, on your dresser, and on the shelves in your laundry room? Do these household products pose a potential health risk to you and your family? You now have an easy way to answer those questions thanks to the unveiling of a consumer's guide that provides easy-to-understand information on the health hazards of more than 4,000 everyday common household products.

The new Household Products Database (<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>) was created by the National Library of Medicine (NLM). Many household products contain substances that can pose risks to health if they are ingested or inhaled or if they come in contact with the eyes and skin. The database presents the potential health effects of products in detail and in consumer-friendly language.

"The Household Products Database is a natural outgrowth of the work that the Library has done in recent years, educating the public about environmental risks posed by chemicals in the air, soil and water," explained NLM Director Dr. Donald A.B. Lindberg. "Last year, we unveiled Tox Town (<http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov>), a site that introduces consumers to the toxic chemicals and environmental risks they might encounter in everyday life, in everyday places,



### **Harmful or just messy? Two girls experiment with lipstick and hairspray, 2 of the 4,000 everyday items in the Household Products database.**

like schools, office buildings and factories. With the Household Products site, we go inside the user's home and get quite specific about products and their health risks."

The Household Products Database is designed to help answer questions such as:

- What chemicals are contained in specific brands and in what percentage?
- Which products contain specified chemicals?
- Who manufactures a specific brand? How can I contact the manufacturer?
- What are the potential health effects (acute and chronic) of the chemical ingredients in a specific brand?

For example, a homeowner trying to decide which algae-killing product to use in her swimming pool could select the "Landscape/Yard/Swimming Pool" category in Household Products and click on "algaecide." She could then choose several brands to examine for chemical content and possible health hazards.

"As the world's largest library of the health sciences, NLM has provided an important set of databases for toxicologists and other scientists for many years," observed Dr. Jack Snyder, NLM associate director and a medical toxicologist. "The target audience of the Household Products Database, however, is both scientists and the general public." The database allows users to browse a product category, such as "Pesticides" or "Personal Care," by alphabetical listing or by brand name. Products can also be searched by type, manufacturer, product ingredients, or chemical names.

NLM plans to expand the list of products covered in the Household Products Database and to routinely update product information for the brands currently in the database.

Located in Bethesda, Maryland, the National Library of Medicine, the world's largest library of the health sciences, is a component of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services.