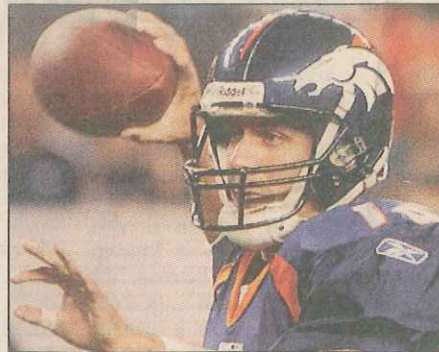


SPORTS

NFL Week 3

Colts on a rout

Jake Plummer and Denver destroy Oakland Raiders ■ 1, 7C



By Ed Andrieski, AP

Plummer: 3 TDs in 1st quarter of 31-10 win.

USA TODAY

NO. 1 IN THE USA



Music

Listen up!

Dave Matthews, left, goes solo; Gloria Estefan returns; and Nickelback is no slug ■ CD reviews, 1, 6D

By Mark Mainz, Getty Images

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

Newsline

News Money Sports Life

Dollar slides — and stocks follow, 1, 5B

Index	Close	Change
Dow Jones industrial average	9535.41	↓ 109.41
Nasdaq composite	1874.62	↓ 31.08
T-bond, 30-year yield	5.14%	▲ 0.07
USA TODAY Internet 50	100.04	↓ 1.85

Sources: USA TODAY research, MarketWatch.com



Flame retardant found in breast milk

U.S. levels highest in the world, study says

By Elizabeth Weise USA TODAY

A toxic chemical used to make furniture, foam and electronics fire resistant is turning up in high amounts in the breast milk of women in the USA.

Two studies, one out today, found that all of the women tested were contaminated with polybrominated diphenyl ethers. Their PBDE levels were the highest in the world: 10 to 20 times higher than those in Europe, where the chem-

icals are being phased out.

The Environmental Working Group, a non-profit environmental research organization, tested the milk of 20 women. It found levels ranging from 9.5 to 1,078 parts per billion. The women were recruited via EWG's Web site.

It is not yet known how this chemical affects people; no studies have been done on what a safe level would be. But "this is another wake-up call," says Linda Birnbaum, director of the Environmental Protection Agency's experimental toxicology lab. Levels of PBDEs in humans are doubling every two to five years, she says.

A University of Texas-Houston

What are PBDEs?

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers are among the most common flame retardants in the USA. Starting next year, they will be banned in Europe. In 2008, they will be banned in California.

Experts say it's still safe to breast-feed. Story, 10A

study by Arnold Schecter, professor of environmental sciences, and Birnbaum found levels in breast milk from 5 to 418 parts per billion in 47 American women. It was published last month in Environmental Health Perspectives. Breast milk is tested because it's the least invasive way to test fat, where PBDEs are stored.

In mice and rats, studies show PBDEs may cause cognitive and behavior changes during development; it also may lead to higher cancer rates. Peter O'Toole, of the Bromine Science and Environmental Forum, says human effects can't be extrapolated from rodents.

Though the USA has the world's

toughest flame retardancy standards, 3,000 people die in fires each year. The Chemical Manufacturers Association estimates the number would be up to 960 higher without such flame retardants.

PBDEs may enter the environment during manufacturing or when products break down, though no one yet knows for sure. Some experts say the major source is animal fat in food. One study found them in house dust.

Schecter advocates using less toxic alternatives: "These are our babies. Do we want them to be dumber than we are because their brains are being attacked by these toxic chemicals?"