
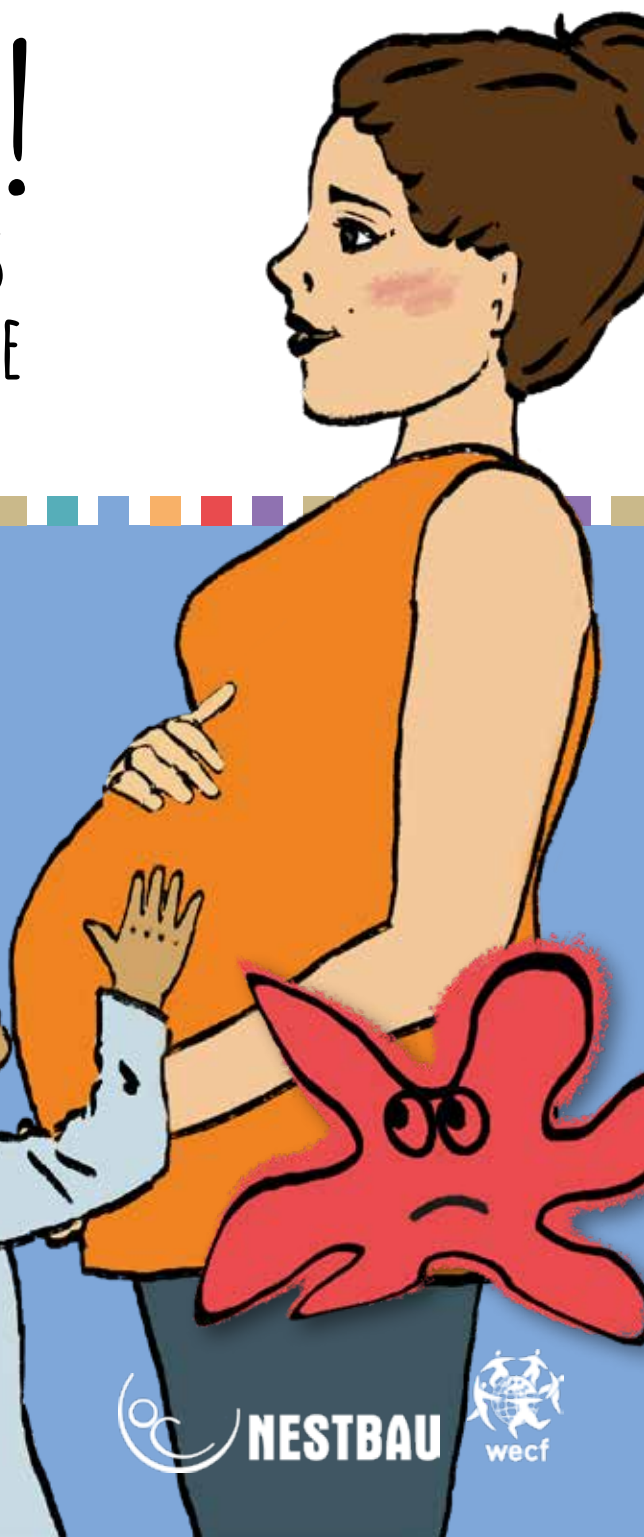


# BEWARE!

## TOXIC CHEMICALS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Better protection  
from toxic chemicals,   
for yourself, your child,  
your family  
and your loved ones.



2ND EDITION FROM  
"I AM PREGNANT"



**NESTBAU**





# A HEALTHY START TO LIFE

Dear readers,

The birth of a child brings many exciting changes, which you of course you have to learn and adjust too.

During the pregnancy there are many things that you need to consider, like eating healthily, refraining from smoking and drinking alcohol. Lesser acknowledged however, is how certain chemicals in food, cleaning products, textiles and other products can be harmful to your health, especially those chemicals that act like hormones.

Mother and child are very sensitive to outside influences whilst pregnant and in the first phase of life. We advise you to be especially careful during this sensitive time and expose yourself to as few harmful chemicals as possible.

Sadly, current laws insufficiently protect us from harmful chemicals that pose health risks. In addition, there are no labelling requirements for many product groups. This means, we cannot recognise what chemicals are in certain products. WECF actively campaigns to change this. Until then, you'll have to protect yourself as much as best you can, but how?

This booklet will provide you with information and simple tips on how to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals in everyday life so that you, your child, and your entire family are protected from potential harmful effects.

Your WECF Nesting-Team



## SMALL TIPS, BIG IMPACT

*Simple way's to reduce everyday  
hazardous chemicals*

1

Eat healthy! Buy fresh, unpackaged food, if possible - regional, seasonal and organically grown.

2

Store your foods in glass or porcelain containers. Hazardous chemicals from plastic containers can leach into your food.

3

Minimise your contact with harmful chemicals: Avoid spray cans, hair dye, paints or varnishes. Use eco-friendly cleaning products, and use them economically and in diluted amounts.

4

Favour products with ecological labels, such as the "EU Flower", the "Blue Angel", "Natrue", "Cosmos" or "Spielgut".

5

Ventilate for five to ten minutes several times a day and clean floors regularly. This eliminates polluted dust and air from indoors.

6

Avoid scented candles, room sprays and toilet blocks, they are unnecessary as they pollute the air in your home.





## PREGNANCY, BABIES AND CHEMICALS BE AWARE!

Pesticides on fruit and vegetables, softeners in plastic, fragrances in washing and cleaning products, preservatives in cosmetics – many everyday products contain chemicals which could be harmful to both you and your child's health. They can be allergenic, irritate the respiratory system and the skin, impair fertility and may be carcinogenic. Especially problematic are chemicals which mimic hormones, (so called EDCs, Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals, also called "hormone disrupters").

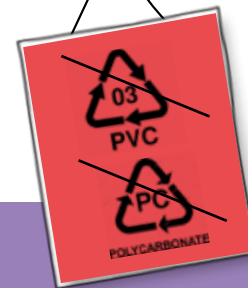
EDCs are found in many everyday products such as food, plastic packaging, cans, receipts made from thermal paper, cosmetics and much more. If EDCs make their way into the human body's, they can interfere with the body's messenger system (the endocrine system) and so disrupt hormone-controlled development phases in the womb. Developing fetuses are particularly sensitive to EDCs because the body's own hormonal system controls the healthy development and functions of the body. If it is disturbed, this may result in health problems which either present at birth or much later in life.

The World Health Organization suspects there is a link between EDCs and the increasing emergence of hormone-induced types of cancer (such as breast, testicular and prostate cancers), fertility disorders, reduced sperm quality, obesity, adult-onset diabetes, neurological diseases, earlier puberty and menopause.

EDCs



## WHILE SHOPPING BE A CONSCIENTIOUS SHOOPER AND BUY LESS!



Be a conscious shopper: less is more. Take time to think about what you really need. With every product, you may be taking more hazardous chemicals into your home.

- If possible, avoid plastic products. In particular soft PVC (fig. 3) and polycarbonates (PC), they could contain harmful plasticizers like Phthalates or Bisphenol A (BPA).
- Many things, such as baby accessories and furniture made from wood, can be bought second-hand and may contain less hazardous chemicals.
- Buy organic and eco-labeled products, preferably unpacked.
- Smell products, avoid those which smell strongly of chemicals or are heavily scented as they are more likely to emit hazardous chemicals into your surroundings.
- Independent reviews are helpful for purchasing decisions. You can find these online or in review magazines.
- It can be hard to identify the materials used in many products like textiles, shoes or furniture. While shopping, ask about products' contents. Our app "Giftfrei einkaufen" (toxic-free shopping) lists chemicals to avoid.



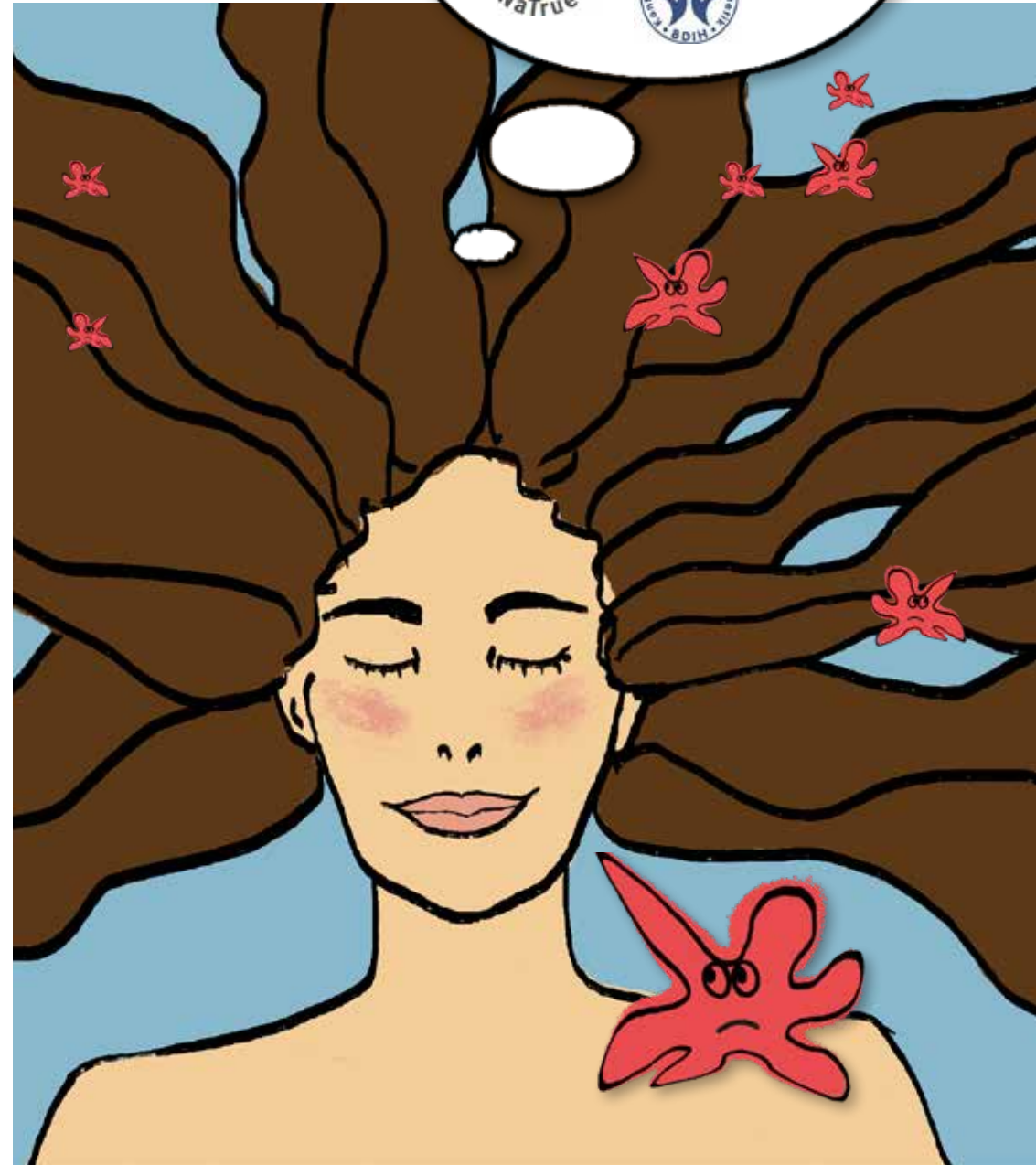


IN THE BATHROOM

# PRETTY OR PRETTY NASTY, HOW DOES THAT WORK?

Cosmetic and skin care products often contain a cocktail of chemicals. They can contain chemicals and substances which are potentially allergenic and are even suspected of being carcinogenic. Some preservatives like parabens or UV filters affect hormones. Opt for certified organic products, use less or make your own. By doing so you could effectively reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and substances.

- It might be difficult but if possible, refrain from using hair dye during your pregnancy and nursing period. Dyes contain very toxic, allergenic chemicals. Even so-called natural-based products also contain irritating and allergenic chemicals.
- Nail varnishes and removers are sources of toxic chemicals – they are best avoided.
- When buying cosmetics or skin care products, it's best to choose certified organic products, consider using less or make your own.
- You can also try making cosmetic products yourself. Pure organic plant-based oils are best. Instructions for these are online. Avoid essential oils as they can irritate the skin. Store in a cool place, in glass or porcelain containers.





AT HOME

# REDUCING HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS, BUT HOW?

Chemicals can be released from furniture, textiles, wall paint, electronic gadgets, plastics and many other products. They can collect in the air and dust where they can be breathed in and absorbed through the skin.

- ⇒ You can reduce this risk by regularly vacuuming, dusting and wiping down surfaces. You should also frequently air your home.
- ⇒ When using cleaning products: less is still effective! Choose eco-friendly products without phosphates, bleach, solvents, preservatives and disinfectant, as well as fragrances. Use products sparingly. A mild multipurpose cleaner, citric acid or vinegar for descaling, a mild scouring agent and bicarbonate of soda will suffice. Look out for ecological labels. Wire sponges, brushes, toilet plungers and microfiber cloths will reduce the use of chemicals.
- ⇒ Cleaning products labelled "irritant" or "corrosive" can harm health. Antibacterial cleaners and disinfectants are unnecessary in the home.







## IN THE KITCHEN VARIED, FRESH AND ORGANIC



Pregnant women are quite literally eating for two. With little effort you can minimize hazardous chemicals in the kitchen and at the dinner table – also for when the baby has arrived.

- ⇒ Cooking fresh is best – avoid processed or canned foodstuffs. Tins often have coatings which can release BPA and other bisphenols. Plastic packaging contains plastic softeners, among other harmful chemicals, which can leach into the foodstuff. Choose unpackaged products, thereby reducing both harmful chemicals and waste.
- ⇒ Purchase drinks for yourself and your children in glass bottles. PET bottles leach plastic softeners and other toxic chemicals; unfortunately, even BPA-free plastic bottles can still contain other harmful bisphenols.
- ⇒ Sea fish like halibut, swordfish, tuna can accumulate traces of mercury. Oily fish such as salmon, herring and eel can contain long-lasting hazardous chemicals. It is best to completely avoid these types of fish.
- ⇒ Store food stuffs in porcelain or glass containers. Do not heat non-stick pans to very high temperatures as this could release toxic particles. Cast-iron or stainless steel are good alternatives. Do not reheat or microwave foodstuffs in plastic containers.



GLASS  
IS BETTER



EAT  
FRESH FOOD!



WHEN AVAILABLE,  
BUY ORGANIC FRUIT  
AND VEGETABLES AS  
THEY ARE FREE FROM  
PESTICIDES



A NEST FOR YOUR CHILD

## COZY AND AS TOXIC-FREE AS POSSIBLE

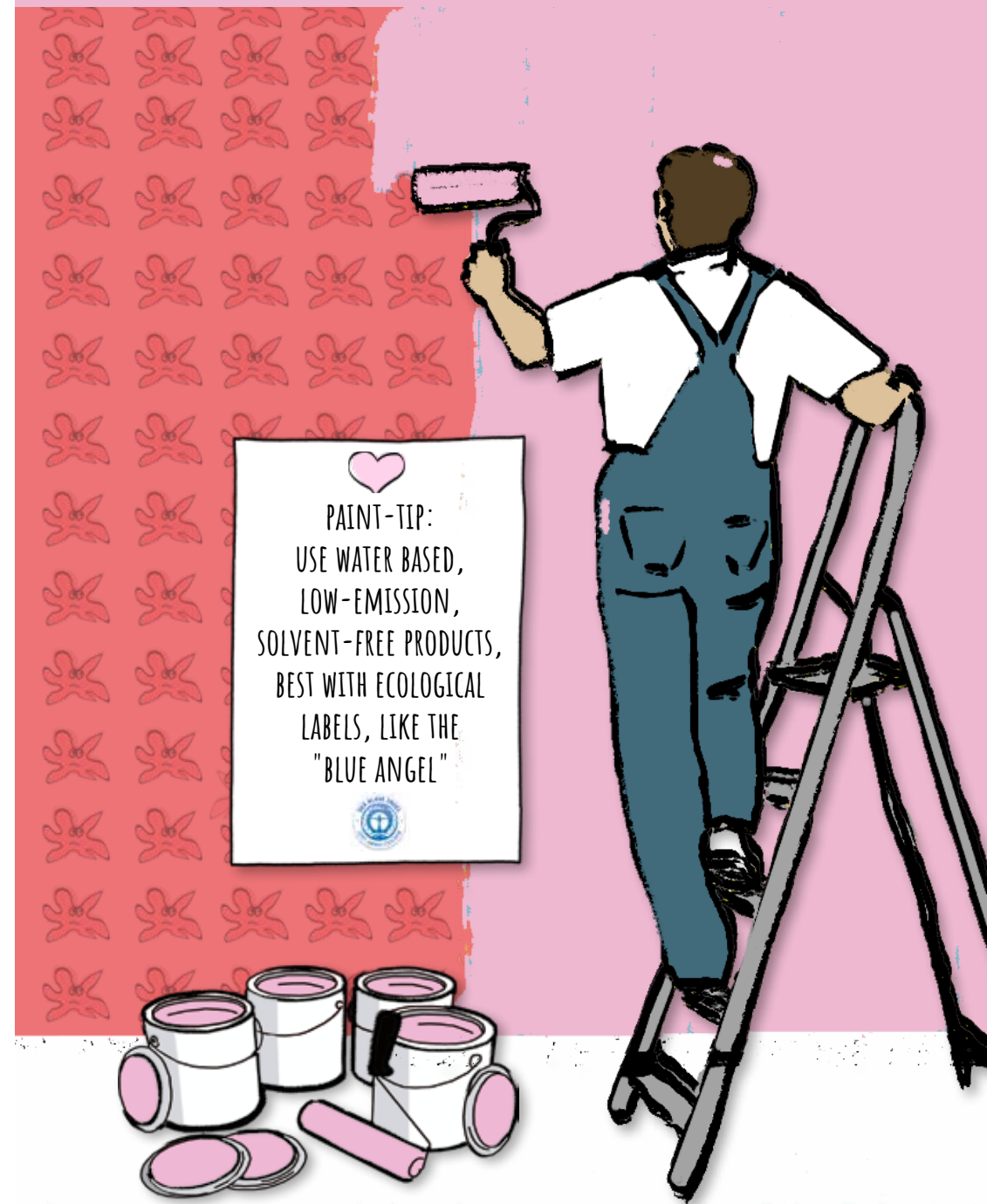
When a baby arrives, the nesting instincts are awakened: there is a flurry of renovations and refurbishments. Yet, hidden in many paints, varnishes, fabrics, furniture and mattresses are toxic chemicals which are neither good for you or your baby. Pregnant women should let others make the necessary renovations. Also, it is important to undertake renovations in good time, at least 3 months prior to the due date. Then, allow your home to ventilate.

➔ Avoid anti-mold paints as they contain harmful biocides which can affect the indoor air quality long-term. Opt for paper or acrylic wall papers and soluble paste; vinyl wall paper contains toxic PVC and plastic softeners.

➔ Flooring should be PVC-free. Wood, natural linoleum or stone, or cork flooring are good for a healthy interior environment and easily cleaned. Carpets or rugs (without a PVC base) can be easily removed and cleaned.

➔ Remove all packaging from a new mattress and air it thoroughly before you or your baby sleep on it.

➔ Look out for ecological labels when purchasing furniture or fabrics. A good alternative is second-hand solid wood furniture.



PAINT-TIP:  
USE WATER BASED,  
LOW-EMISSION,  
SOLVENT-FREE PRODUCTS,  
BEST WITH ECOLOGICAL  
LABELS, LIKE THE  
"BLUE ANGEL"





## WHAT ELSE?



### Phones, Smartphones and Wi-Fi

Although the risks posed by electrical smog have not been yet been fully proven, scientists advise caution. Switch off your Wi-Fi when not in use, and do not carry your phone on your person or leave it near your child while switched on.

### Passive-smoking

Take to care to ensure you have a smoke-free environment. Clothing and soft furnishings absorb smoke and therefore act as a source of toxic chemicals.

### Workspace

Pay strict attention to workplace health and safety guidance during pregnancy. If you work with fabrics, cosmetics or hair products, plastics or other toxic chemicals regularly ventilate rooms. If you have further questions, refer to your doctor or union.

### Medication

We recommend: During pregnancy, only take medication and nutritional supplements after consulting your doctor.

## YOUR BABY HAS ARRIVED CONGRATULATIONS!

Here are a few more tips on how you could further cut down on harmful chemicals:

- ➔ It is sufficient to bathe your child once or twice a week. Organic plant oil, e.g. olive oil, can be used as a simple alternative to bath-essence. A mild soap is best for washing. Wet-wipes appear practical but contain synthetic fragrances and produce unnecessary waste. If you must, only resort to them when travelling. At home, a wet cloth will do the trick.
- ➔ Cotton and reusable nappies are a good alternative to disposables. When buying disposable nappies buy those branded as fragrance-free and with ecological labels.
- ➔ Washing powders, cleaning agents, and cosmetics all contain synthetic fragrances. Air fresheners and scented candles can also be allergenic. Simply reduce the overall amount of synthetic fragrances you use around the house.
- ➔ Prams, car seats, toys and many other accessories can contain numerous harmful chemicals. Independent tests and labels help when purchasing. These are also helpful when you are buying second-hand, as you can look out for certified labels and avoid poorly reviewed products.



BEFORE FIRST USING  
NEW CLOTHING, BED LINEN  
AND SOFT TOYS, IT'S BEST  
TO WASH WITH A SMALL  
AMOUNT OF FRAGRANCE FREE  
WASHING POWDER.

AVOID FABRIC SOFTENER!





# DO YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION?

WE HAVE PUT TOGETHER THESE TIPS ON OUR WEBSITE [WWW.NESTBAU.INFO](http://WWW.NESTBAU.INFO).  
THE APP "GIFTFREI EINKAUFEN" (TOXIC-FREE SHOPPING) IS ANOTHER  
PRACTICAL TOOL FOR WHEN YOU'RE OUT AND ABOUT. THIS INFORMATION  
IS AVAILABLE ONLY IN GERMAN.



## Other useful aids are (in German):

- Testresults from Öko-Test and the product testing from Stiftung Warentest
- Code Check – the App for your phone [www.codecheck.info/app](http://www.codecheck.info/app)
- ToxFox-App from BUND: [www.bund.net/chemie/toxfox/](http://www.bund.net/chemie/toxfox/)
- Ask Reach – For questions on product contents: [www.reach-info.de/verbraucherfrage.html](http://www.reach-info.de/verbraucherfrage.html)

## Our App „Giftfrei einkaufen“



Android



iPhone



[www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)



## DISCLAIMER

**Women Engage for a Common Future, WECF e.V., [www.wecf.org](http://www.wecf.org)**

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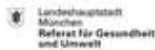
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