# Jeff Garner’s documentary reveals hidden chemical dangers in everyday clothing



As the fashion industry faces mounting scrutiny regarding its environmental and health impacts, designer Jeff Garner is making a compelling case for urgent change through his award-winning documentary, *Let Them Be Naked*. Slated for a global streaming debut over Mother’s Day weekend (8–11 May), the film is not only a personal tribute to Garner's late mother, Peggy Lynn Garner, who passed away from cancer, but also a clarion call to expose the hidden hazards associated with synthetic materials commonly found in clothing.

Presented by Earth Conscious Life and supported by Suzy Amis Cameron's Inside Out LLC, the documentary takes a bold look at the alarming presence of toxic chemicals in garment production. As awareness grows surrounding the repercussions of these substances, the industry finds itself at a crucial crossroads. Regulators, scientists, and sustainable fashion advocates increasingly demand transparency and responsibility within the complex lifecycle of fashion goods.

The impetus for *Let Them Be Naked* stems from a deeply personal loss. Garner, who has championed sustainable fashion since 2002, turned his grief into a passionate investigation following his mother's death in 2019. “This is a gift to all the mothers who deserve to know what lies in their clothing,” Garner stated ahead of the film's release. He emphasises that no one, particularly mothers, should unknowingly expose themselves to carcinogenic toxins present in everyday apparel such as bras and underwear.

The film captures Garner and his team traversing the globe in search of well-documented yet underreported health risks associated with synthetic fibres and industrial dyes. The evidence is compelling; one notable study from 2018 revealed that benzothiazole, a chemical prevalent in many garments, can penetrate skin and enter the body. Other research highlights the stark reality that up to 37% of toxic chemicals in clothing may be absorbed through the skin, with increased absorption when sweat or friction occurs—common factors in regular wear.

Coinciding with *Let Them Be Naked*’s release is a global shift towards stricter environmental regulations in fashion. In April, the United Nations dedicated its International Day of Zero Waste to the industry, with officials warning that “unless we accelerate action, dressing to kill could kill the planet.” The UN's messaging resonates particularly in light of the thousands of chemicals involved in textile production, many of which pose significant threats to both human health and ecosystems.

Despite moments of progress, institutional complacency regarding chemical safety has long plagued the fashion industry. For decades, considerations of consumer health and safety have been largely sidelined by financial and aesthetic concerns. While a few luxury brands and independent designers are beginning to explore sustainable alternatives, systemic change remains sluggish.

Garner's mission now revolves around educating the public to empower a movement focused on non-toxic fashion. His own brand, Prophetik, prominently employs natural fibres and plant-based dyes cultivated on his Tennessee farm—once specialized methods now gaining popularity among environmentally aware designers.

The documentary also serves as an unlikely bridge between fashion and legislative advocacy. Garner and his team are determined to advocate for tighter regulations governing chemical use in clothing manufacturing. Their ambition lies not just in raising awareness among consumers but also in stimulating policy reforms that prioritise health and safety.

In a sector traditionally devoted to aesthetics, *Let Them Be Naked* poses a far more daunting question: what lies beneath the fabric? As the fashion industry recalibrates within a context of heightened climate and health consciousness, Garner’s documentary emerges as both a poignant tribute and a powerful manifesto—a call to strip away the glossy facade and confront the underlying chemical realities woven into every garment.

Jeff Garner’s *Let Them Be Naked* will be available globally from 8–11 May via www.letthembenaked.com, presented by Earth Conscious Life and supported by Inside Out LLC.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://fashionunited.uk/news/culture/let-them-be-naked-documentary-lifts-veil-on-chemical-risks-in-clothing/2025050981517)
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Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://fashionunited.uk/news/culture/let-them-be-naked-documentary-lifts-veil-on-chemical-risks-in-clothing/2025050981517> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://time.com/5631818/wash-new-clothes/> - This article discusses the health risks associated with wearing unwashed new clothes, particularly focusing on allergic contact dermatitis caused by disperse dyes in synthetic materials like polyester and nylon. It highlights that sweating and friction can cause these dyes to leach out, leading to skin reactions. The piece also mentions other harmful chemicals found in new garments, such as quinoline, a possible carcinogen, and emphasizes the importance of washing new clothes before wearing them to reduce exposure to these substances.
3. <https://www.earthday.org/toxic-textiles-the-chemicals-in-our-clothing/> - This article from Earth Day explores the various harmful chemicals used in the apparel industry, including flame retardants, phthalates, lead, chromium, and perfluorinated substances (PFAS). It details how these chemicals are used to impart desirable properties to textiles but also pose significant health risks, such as endocrine disruption, reproductive toxicity, and cancer. The piece underscores the need for greater awareness and advocacy for safer manufacturing practices in the fashion industry.
4. <https://gesund.bund.de/en/chemicals-in-clothing> - This resource from the German Federal Centre for Health Education provides information on potentially harmful chemicals found in textiles, such as formaldehyde, which is used to make clothes crease-resistant. It discusses the health implications of these chemicals, including the risk of contact allergies and the carcinogenic properties of certain substances. The article also mentions the regulatory limits for formaldehyde in textiles within the European Union and advises consumers on potential health risks associated with chemical-treated clothing.
5. <https://www.globaltextiletimes.com/opinions/textile-dyeing-environmental-and-health-risks-explored/> - This article examines the environmental and health risks associated with textile dyeing processes. It highlights the use of over 20,000 different chemicals in dyeing, many of which are carcinogens and endocrine disruptors. The piece discusses the health hazards faced by workers, including respiratory issues and skin disorders, and the potential reproductive health risks. It also addresses the environmental impact of these chemicals, emphasizing the need for safer practices in the textile industry.
6. <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/article/toxic-textiles-potential-health-risks-associated-with-toxic-chemicals-in-clothing/171082/> - This article delves into the toxic chemicals present in clothing, such as heavy metals like cobalt, copper, chromium, and lead, which are used to enhance dye properties. It discusses the health risks associated with these substances, including skin conditions and potential carcinogenic effects. The piece also covers the use of flame retardants and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in textiles, highlighting their environmental persistence and associated health concerns, and calls for stricter regulations in the textile industry.
7. <https://www.naturopathy-uk.com/news/blog/2023/05/23/unseen-chemicals-hiding-in-your-clothes/> - This blog post from the CNM College of Naturopathic Medicine discusses the hidden chemicals in synthetic fibers, such as cadmium, antimony, formaldehyde, benzene, and perfluorochemicals (PFCs). It explains how these substances can be absorbed through the skin and cause serious health problems, including cancer, reproductive issues, and liver and kidney damage. The article also addresses environmental concerns, noting that synthetic fibers are non-biodegradable and contribute to pollution and ecosystem disruption.