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Six years ago, when Kelly Preston's son, Jett, was three, she and husband Travolta were **terrified when the boy suddenly became gravely ill and was rushed to the ER.** "He was really lethargic," says Preston, 39. "He had a high fever and swollen lymph glands. It seemed like he had a serious flu. He had a rash all over his body. They didn't know what it was." She was stunned when she learned that her son did not have the flu, but rather had contracted a form of Kawasaki Syndrome, a rare vascular illness, reports PEOPLE. **Preston says she was even more shocked when she learned that exposure to chemicals used to clean the carpets in her home caused her son's near-fatal illness. "They tell you that it's safe, and that it's okay," Preston said of the cleaning products.** Determined to help other parents and spread the word about the dangers out there, Preston voluntarily teamed up with the HUD-sponsored Children's Health Environmental Coalition (CHEC). With childhood illnesses increasing in the U.S., many experts believe that commonly used chemicals can harm children and can cause non-genetic cancers, learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). When Jett got sick, Preston says there was little information available to her and her husband about the danger of chemical exposure to children. That is no longer the case, thanks to CHEC. On Feb. 25, the organization launched a user-friendly Web site that offers information on commonly used chemicals in the home. In addition, Preston serves on the CHEC board of directors and made a video with Olivia Newton-John last May called "Protecting Your Baby from Toxins at Home." "This story is bigger than people think it is," says Preston. "It's a hot topic and people want to know about it."

For more information on the Children's Health Environmental Coalition, visit www.chechnet.org/healthhouse.com.

[Read about Kelly Preston's story in "the power of living well" HEALTH Nov 2002](#)