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Lead Hazards in Some Holiday Toys

In the following article, written by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), parents are advised of the potential lead hazards associated with some holiday toys and toy jewelry. Review these important facts to keep your loved ones safe this holiday season



The holiday season is here, and that means many children will be given toys as gifts. While new toys are a holiday tradition, parents should be aware of potential lead hazards associated with toys, including toy jewelry. Review these important facts to keep your children safe this holiday season.

Lead is invisible to the naked eye and has no smell. Children may be exposed to it from consumer products through normal handling of the product. They often place toys and other objects, as well as their fingers that have touched these objects, in their mouth, which exposes them to lead paint or dust.

Lead in Toys

Toys that have been made in other countries and then imported into the United States, or antique toys or collectibles passed down through generations; often contain lead that puts children at risk for such exposure. To reduce these risks, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issues recalls of toys that could potentially expose children to lead. Learn more at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>.

Lead may be used in two aspects of toy manufacturing.

Paint: Lead may be in the paint on toys. It was banned in house paint, on products marketed to children, and in dishes and cookware in the United States in 1978. However, lead is still widely used in other countries and therefore can be found on imported toys. Lead may also be found on toys made in the United States before the ban.

Plastic: While regulated, the use of lead in plastics has not been banned in the United States. It softens and stabilizes the plastic; however, when the plastic is exposed to substances such as sunlight, air, and detergents, the plastic breaks down and may form a lead dust.



How can I test a toy for lead?

Only a certified laboratory can accurately test a toy for lead. Although do-it-yourself kits are available, they do not indicate how much lead is present, and their reliability at detecting low levels of lead has not been determined.

What should I do if I am concerned about my child's exposure to lead?

If you suspect that your child has been exposed to a toy containing lead, remove the toy immediately. The only way to tell if your child has been exposed to lead is to have the child's blood tested. Your health care provider can advise whether such a test is needed and also can recommend treatment if your child has been exposed to lead.

Lead in Toy Jewelry

If jewelry containing lead is swallowed or put in a child's mouth, the child can be poisoned.

What should I do if I believe my child has put lead jewelry in their mouth?

See your health care provider. He or she can perform a blood test to see whether your child has been exposed to lead and recommend treatment if necessary. Most children with elevated blood-lead levels do not have any symptoms. However, there is no safe level of lead in blood. As blood-lead levels increase, a larger effect on children's learning and behavior will occur. A blood-lead test is the only way to know if your child has an elevated lead level.

What are the effects of wearing toy jewelry?

Just wearing toy jewelry that contains lead will not cause your child to have a high level of lead in their blood. However, small children often put things in their mouth. You should make sure that all children in your household do not have access to jewelry or other items that may contain lead.

Recall Information

The CPSC asks parents to search for possible recalls of toys their children have and take the toys away immediately if they have been recalled. Parents should search their children's toys for metal jewelry and throw it away. Photos and descriptions of recalled toys and toy jewelry are available on the [CPSC](#) Web site. CPSC can be contacted also by telephone at 1-800-638-2772.

If you have any other questions or concerns, feel free to call Debb or Jan at 457-8583 or stop by their office in City Hall at 306 E. Main in East Helena.



