

Keeping Kids Safe from Toys Contaminated with Lead

- ❖ I have heard that some toys are being recalled because they contain lead, is this true?

Yes, this is true. Toy manufacturers and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission have issued recalls for several types of children's toys and other products because their surface paint contained levels of lead that were more than U.S. safety standards.

- ❖ I have heard that there is a new "lead law". What does this new law do?

The new lead law, called the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA). When CPSIA was signed into law in August 2008, it became unlawful to sell products that had been recalled due to lead contamination. New requirements of this law took effect in February 2009. These new requirements apply to the sale of new children's' products as well as the re-sale of these products. CPSIA makes it illegal to sell children's products with more than 600 ppm total lead. The total lead limit will drop to 300 ppm in August 2009. The law requires:

1. *Manufacturers* and importers must certify that children's products made after 2/10/2009 meet the requirements of the lead ban. But they do not have to test their products until February 2010.
2. *Major retailers* and dollar stores cannot sell toys with banned lead levels and must remove toys that exceed the lead levels.
3. *Thrift stores* and private online retailers cannot sell toys with banned lead levels.
4. *Crafters cannot* sell handmade toys with banned lead levels.

❖ How do toys become contaminated with lead?

Lead may be found in the paint of either wooden or plastic toys. It was banned in house paint and other products in the United States in 1978. However, it is still widely used in other countries, and can still be found on toys from other countries. Lead can also be found on toys made in the United States before the ban.

❖ How can my child be exposed to lead in toys?

Children may be exposed to lead as they often place toys, fingers, and other objects in their mouth, exposing themselves to lead paint or dust.



Be aware that some items not meant to be toys, like jewelry, charms, and key chains

may also contain lead. These items can lead to acute lead poisoning or even death if they are mouthed or swallowed.

Lead may cause a number of health problems such as behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures, and death. Children under 6 years old are at higher risk for exposure to lead because of their hand to mouth behavior. If caught early, these lead-related health problems can be limited by reducing the exposure and by medical treatment.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, a child with a blood level up to 10 - 20 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood may not exhibit any visible symptoms, but could still be at risk for lead poisoning and other health problems. A person with a blood lead level of more than 40 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood may have, symptoms such as abdominal pain, constipation, loss of appetite, agitation, lethargy and seizures.

- ❖ What should I do if I think my child has been playing with toys that have been recalled or may be contaminated with lead?

If you think that your child has been exposed to a toy containing lead, take away the toy, immediately. Most children with elevated blood lead levels have no symptoms. The only way to tell if your child has been exposed to lead is to have a blood lead test. Your health care provider can help you decide whether a test is needed, and can recommend next steps, if your child has been exposed. Testing may be appropriate, especially if the child frequently chews on toys, puts toys in his or her mouth, or has frequent hand-to-mouth activity.

- ❖ Why is it important for my child to be tested?

If your health care provider recommends testing, it is important to get the test. If your child has an elevated blood lead level, you need to remove the source of lead and watch your child's health.

- ❖ If my child does not have health insurance that will pay for a lead test, where can I get my child tested at little cost?

Please see the list of low-cost [clinics](#) across Colorado.

- ❖ Can I test my child's toys for lead?

Only a certified laboratory can truly test a toy for lead. Although do-it-yourself kits are available, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment does not currently recommend their use to test toys for lead. These kits were meant to detect high levels of lead in paint, and their ability to detect low levels of lead may be unreliable.

Today, the most common source of lead exposure in young children is deteriorating lead paint in homes, including paint

chips and dust from painted doors and windows. All homes built before 1978 are likely to contain some lead-based paint.



Home test kits certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are still recommended to test for the presence of lead in paint in homes.

❖ Where can I find more information about toy recalls?

The Consumer Product Safety Commission asks that parents check for possible recalls of their children's toys and immediately take the toys away. Photos and descriptions of recalled toys can be found at the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website, or by calling 1-800-638-2772.

❖ What I do with toys that have been recalled?

Children should not be allowed to play with recalled toys. Until the toys can be returned or destroyed as directed, put the toys in a place where children cannot find them. Because each recall is different, we recommend that you check the recall notice to learn how to return the toy for a refund or replacement.

❖ How can I learn more about health effects related to lead?

You can get more information from the Frequently Asked Questions about lead from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

❖ How can I select safer toys for my kids?

Please see the following tips for buying toys as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics

For more information about lead in toys, please contact Shannon Rossiter, MPH at 303-692-2617, or toll free at 1 (888) 569-1831, extension 2617.

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP 2007). *Healthy Children, Ask the Pediatrician*. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.aap.org/family/healthychildren/07fall/HC-Fall07-QA.pdf>, accessed March 2009.

American Medical News (2007). *The Dangers of Lead*. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2007/11/05/hlsa1105.htm#s2>, accessed March 2009.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC 2007). *Toys and Childhood Lead Exposure*. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/faq/toys.htm>, accessed March 2009.

Minnesota Department of Health (2008). *Lead Fact Sheet – Toys and Lead*. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/fs/toysandlead.pdf>, accessed March 2009.

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH 2007). *Lead in Children's Toys: Questions and Answers for Parents*. Available on the Internet at: http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/lead/recalls/questions_and_answers.htm, accessed March 2009.

United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (2009). *News from CPSC – CPSC Clarifies Requirements of New Children's Product Safety Laws Taking Effect in February, Guidance Intended for Resellers of Children's Products. Thrift and Consignment Stores*. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prere/09/09086.html>, accessed March 2009.

Low cost clinics across Colorado

DENVER AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Clinica Campesina Family Health Services

Phone: (303) 665-2962

Website: www.clinicacampesina.org

Service Area: Adams and Boulder counties

Clinica Tepeyac

Address: 3617 Kalamath Street, Denver, CO

Phone: 303.458.5302

Website: www.clinicatepeyac.org

Service Area: Varies. Most patients are from Aurora and Thornton.

Colorado Coalition for the Homeless

Phone: (303) 293-2217

Website: www.coloradocoalition.org

Service Area: Denver County

Denver Health Family Health Centers

Phone: (303) 436-6000

Website: www.denverhealth.org

Service Area: City and County of Denver

Doctors Care

Address: 191 E. Orchard Road, Suite 120 NE, Littleton, CO

Phone: 303.730.1313

Website: www.drscare.org

Service Area: Restricted to Douglas, Arapahoe and Elbert Counties only.

Inner City Health Center

Address: 3405 Downing Street, Denver, CO

Phone: 303.296.1767

Service Area: Primarily City of Denver, Denver County and metro area

Metro Community Provider Network

(303) 761-4825 • www.mcpcn.org

Service Area: Adams, Arapahoe, and Jefferson counties

Salud Family Health Centers

Phone: (303) 892-6401 / (800) 388-4325

Website: www.saludclinic.org

Service Area: Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Logan, Morgan and Weld counties

BOULDER

Clinica Campesina Family Health Services

Phone: (303) 665-2962

Website: www.clinicacampesina.org

Service Area: Adams and Boulder counties

People's Clinic

Phone: (303) 449-6050

Website: www.peoplesclinic.org

Service Area: Boulder County

Salud Family Health Centers

Phone: (303) 892-6401 / (800) 388-4325

Website: www.saludclinic.org

Service Area: Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Logan, Morgan and Weld counties

NORTHERN COLORADO

Salud Family Health Centers

Phone: (303) 892-6401 / (800) 388-4325

Website: www.saludclinic.org

Service Area: Adams, Boulder, Larimer, Logan, Morgan and Weld counties

Sunrise Community Health Center

Phone: (970) 353-9403

Service Area: Weld and Larimer counties

COLO. SPRINGS/PUEBLO AREA

Peak Vista Community Health Centers

Phone: (719) 632-5700

Website: www.peakvista.org

Service Area: El Paso, Teller and Park counties

Pueblo Community Health Center

Phone: (719) 543-8711

Website: www.pueblochc.org

Service Area: Pueblo County

SOUTHWEST COLORADO

Dove Creek Community Health Clinic

Phone: (970) 677-2291

Service Area: Dolores, Montezuma, and San Miguel counties

Uncompahgre Medical Center

Phone: (970) 327-4233

Website: www.umclinic.org

Service Area: San Miguel County

EASTERN PLAINS

Plains Medical Center

Phone: (719) 775-2367

Website: www.plainsmedicalcenter.org

Service Area: Adams, Arapahoe, Elbert, Kit Carson and Lincoln counties

High Plains Community Health Center

(719) 336-0261 • www.highplainschc.net

Service Area: Prowers County

SAN LUIS VALLEY

Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.

Phone: (719) 589-5161

Website: www.vwhs.org

Service Area: Alamosa, Bent, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Fremont, La Plata, Mineral, Montezuma, Otero, Rio Grande and Saguache counties

MOUNTAIN

Mountain Family Health Centers

Phone: (303) 258-3206

Website: www.mountainfamily.org

Service Area: Gilpin, Boulder, Garfield, Pitkin, and Eagle counties