

POISON ANTIDOTE

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UTAH POISON CONTROL CENTER

The Lowdown on Lead

Products containing lead seem to be popping up daily, leaving parents and consumers wondering what they can do to keep themselves and their families safe. Children are at particular risk for lead poisoning especially when they are exposed to low levels of lead over a prolonged period of time. Often times there are no noticeable symptoms from lead exposure. Symptoms may be mild such as fatigue, loss of appetite, stomachache, and irritability. However, exposure over time can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and impaired growth. In rare cases where lead concentrations in the body are very high, it can cause seizures, coma and even death. There are a few sources of lead that are of particular concern for children; lead-based paint, imported candy, and toys. Less common sources of lead exposure are; soil, drinking water, dinnerware, and home health remedies such as azarcon, greta, and pay-loo-ah. Herbal remedies from Southeast Asia and Mexico are potential sources of lead and other heavy metal contamination.

Lead-Based Paint in Housing: Lead-based paint is the most common source of lead poisoning in children. Since 1978 lead-based paint was banned for use in housing. Most houses built before 1978 have some lead-based paint in them. The danger exists when there is peeling paint, and lead-contaminated house dust that may exist in these dwellings.

Candy: Many candies imported from Mexico pose a lead poisoning threat. Testing has shown that several candies have a considerably higher content of lead than the FDA allowable safety standards. Some of the candy wrappers have also tested positive for high levels of lead. The lead can leach from the wrapper into the candy, or children may be exposed by licking the wrappers. Some of these candies include: Bolirindo by Duplex, Rollito de Tamarindo by Duplex, Chaca Chaca, Lucas Lemon, and Tablirindo. Candy containing chili powder and or tamarind are more likely to contain lead.

Toys and Toy Jewelry: Children who place objects in their mouth are at greatest risk for ingestion of lead from contaminated toys. There has recently been an increase in toy recalls due to lead content. Keeping informed about what products have been recalled is important for parents and consumers. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) lists current recalled items on their website at: www.cpsc.gov If you have one of the recalled items, discontinue use and contact the manufacturer of the product.

Prevention: Lead poisoning is preventable.

- If you live in housing built before 1978, have the house tested by a reliable agency. Studies have shown that Do-It-Yourself testing kits are unreliable.
- If lead poisoning is suspected, talk to your doctor about obtaining a blood test.
- Lead should be safely removed from the home environment. Contact your local health department for guidance.
- Damp-mop/wipe floors and surfaces in the home regularly.
- Frequently wash children's hands, pacifiers, and toys.
- Keep updated on the latest toy recalls posted by the CPSC.
- Be aware that candy imported from Mexico may pose a lead poisoning risk.
- If you suspect a poisoning call the Utah Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
Consumer Product Safety Commission: www.cpsc.gov
West Texas Poison Control Center: www.poisoncontrol.org



NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK MARCH 16-22, 2008

The purpose of National Poison Prevention Week is to raise awareness to the dangers of unintentional poisonings and remind the public of steps that can be taken to prevent poisonings. The theme of NPPW is:
"Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons".

Please join us in celebrating this important week by promoting awareness to potential poisonings and poison prevention.

Visit our website for more information about National Poison Prevention Week events, and to learn more about poison prevention.

Call FAST to treat a poisoning!
Call FIRST to prevent a poisoning!
1-800-222-1222

