

LEAD, CADMIUM & PHTHALATES HAVE NO BUSINESS IN TOYS AND OTHER KID'S PRODUCTS

The Children's Safe Products Act requires immediate action on three toxic chemicals that are frequently found in toys and children's products.

Lead, cadmium, and phthalates should not be allowed in children's products due to their potential for serious health impacts on kids and here's why.



Chemicals Don't Always Stay in the Products

Toys and other children's products can contain a variety of chemicals of concern, especially as the chemicals are not always chemically bound to the products. When children put these products into their mouths, some of these chemicals may enter their bodies through contact with saliva. Some chemicals may also be released directly into the air and house dust that children breathe.

Children Are The Most Vulnerable and Laws Don't Adequately Protect Them

Because children's bodies are growing and developing, they are more vulnerable to the effects of toxic chemicals than adults. Even small amounts of a chemical can impact a child's ability to reach his or her full potential. Safety regulations for today's toys and other products designed for kids inadequately addresses the presence of chemicals linked to harmful health and developmental impacts for children.

It's Time to Get Rid of Three of the Worst Chemicals in Children's Products!

Lead

Lead is a heavy metal that is used in a wide variety of children's products. It is often used as a stabilizer in PVC/vinyl products and for pigmentation in paint, rubber, plastics, and ceramics. Lead was detected in 35% of the approximately 1,200 toys and kid's products recently tested by the Washington Toxics Coalition, the Toxic-Free Legacy Coalition and many other environmental health organizations (www.HealthyToys.org). 17% of the products had lead levels above the 600 parts per million (ppm) federal recall standard used for lead paint.

Children's Health Concerns:

- Lead impacts brain development, causing learning and developmental problems. Impacts may include decreased IQ scores, shorter attention spans, and delayed learning. When children are exposed to lead, the developmental and nervous system consequences of lead exposure are irreversible.
- Scientists have found there is no safe level of lead for children—even the smallest amount affects children's ability to learn. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that lead in toys and children's products not exceed 40 ppm, a trace amount.

Inadequate regulations:

The ongoing recalls of millions of toys for dangerous levels of lead in paint have demonstrated that current regulations are not protecting our children by keeping unsafe products out of stores and our homes. A 30-year old federal law limits lead in paint on children's toys to 600 ppm. Even worse, there are no legal restrictions in Washington state on the widespread use of lead as a stabilizer additive in plastics like vinyl, or on the use of lead in jewelry. Washington and eighteen other states limit lead in packaging materials, such as shopping bags and product wrappings, but these restrictions do not yet apply to the products inside the packaging.

Cadmium

Like lead, cadmium is a heavy metal that is found in a variety of children's products. It is used as a stabilizer in PVC/vinyl products and in coatings and pigments used in plastics and paint.

Children's Health Concerns:

- Cadmium is associated with developmental deficiencies, including delayed sensory-motor development, hormonal effects, and altered behavior.
- Cadmium is a known carcinogen, associated with lung and prostate cancer, and exposure may also result in bone loss and increased blood pressure.

Lack of regulation:

There are no restrictions on the amount of cadmium used in children's products in the US. The European Union restricts cadmium in plastic products, including PVC, and in electronic products including electronic toys. Washington and eighteen other states limit cadmium in packaging materials, such as shopping bags and product wrappings, but these restrictions do not yet apply to the products inside the packaging.



All of these toys contain lead in amounts well above the federal lead paint limit. The vinyl penguin and plastic car are legal because there are no federal limits on lead in vinyl or plastic. There are also no federal limits on cadmium and phthalates in children's products.

Phthalates

Phthalates are a group of chemicals used in many plastics and personal care products, as well as in a wide range of industrial applications. In many plastics, especially PVC/vinyl products, phthalates are used as a softening agent to make the plastic flexible and more durable. In personal care products, including lotions, shampoos, and other products made for children, phthalates are used as fragrance carriers. Phthalates are often added to nail polish as an anti-chipping agent.

Children's Health Concerns:

- Research studies in animals and humans have found that some phthalates can disturb normal hormonal processes, often at low levels of exposure. Such hormone disrupting chemicals pose a special risk to children, whose bodies are still developing through processes controlled by hormones. Exposures may produce developmental defects or increase the risk of diseases such as cancer later in life.
- Exposure to phthalates has been linked to altered levels of reproductive hormones in baby boys.
- DINP and other phthalates are commonly used as additives in plastic toys. Studies have demonstrated possible links between DINP and adverse impacts on the reproductive system, kidneys, liver, and blood.
- Phthalates are in our kid's bodies. Human testing by the federal government finds phthalates in almost all of the population, with the highest levels in children ages 6 to 11 years and in women.

Currently Unregulated in Washington State:

There are no federal or Washington State regulations limiting phthalates in children's products. However, based on evidence of their health risks, the European Union has prohibited phthalates in toys since 1999, and recently expanded their ban to include all childcare products that might be placed in the mouth by young children. The European Union also banned certain phthalates from cosmetic products in 2003 due to their reproductive toxicity. California recently passed a law to ban six types of phthalates in toys and baby products.

The Washington State Legislature must act now to protect children from toxic chemicals in toys and other products by passing the Children's Safe Products Act (HB 2647 and SB 5630).

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