

# Product Recall Fact Sheet

## Childhood Lead Poisoning And Children's Products

Childhood Lead Poisoning is the most common pediatric public health problem, yet it is entirely preventable. Once a child has been poisoned, the impairment it may cause is irreversible. Lead harms children's nervous systems and is associated with reduced IQ, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities. In large doses, it can cause coma, convulsions and death. While lead paint in homes built before 1978 continues to be the most common source of lead exposure, children may also be exposed to lead from toys that have been manufactured in other countries, antique toys, and collectibles that have been passed down from generation to generation.

### Two Ways Lead Can Be Used In Manufacturing Toys

Paint: While lead paint was banned in the United States for use in house paint, on items marketed to children, and cookware in 1978, it is still widely used in other countries and therefore can be found on products and toys that are imported into the country. Lead paint may also be found on older toys made in the United States before 1978.

Plastic: The use of lead in plastics has not been banned. Lead is added to plastic to stabilize the plastic molecules from heat. This increases both the durability and flexibility of the plastic. A dust forms when the chemical bond between lead and plastic breaks down from sunlight, air, and detergents.

### Childhood Exposure

No amount of lead is safe for the body. Lead dust is fine and cannot be identified by sight. When a consumer product contains lead, children can be exposed because of normal hand-to-mouth behavior that young children often do. By placing their fingers, hands, and objects in their mouth, it could potentially put the child at risk for lead poisoning.

### Should Your Child Be Tested

You should contact your child's health care provider if you feel that your child has been exposed to lead. Only a blood lead test will tell how much lead is in your child's blood at the time of the test. Most children with an elevated blood lead level show no symptoms. If your child has been exposed to lead, only your health provider can recommend and provide treatment.

State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health  
Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program, 410 Capitol Avenue, MS # 51-LED, PO Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134 (860) 509-7299  
[http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/lead\\_program.htm](http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/lead_program.htm)

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## Testing Your Toys

While there are many do-it-yourself lead detecting kits available, these tests have proven to be unreliable and may give misleading results. A certified laboratory is the only accurate way to test a toy for lead. Only a parent or guardian can determine if the cost to test the toy or product outweighs the cost of the item.

## What Is Connecticut Doing?

The Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection's Product Safety Unit enforces many safety regulations for toys and other children's articles under the State Child Protection Act. These laws are meant to ensure that manufacturers design and produce their products so that hazardous merchandise is not sold in the marketplace.

The Product Safety Unit inspects local stores on a routine basis. They look at the toys to determine if there are small parts in toys intended for children under the age of 3, as well as sharp points and edges in toys intended for children under the age of 8. These toys must have proper labeling indicating the hazards in these toys. Suspect toys will be purchased and tested by the inspectors. If the toys are found to fail the State Child Protection Act, the unit will remove the toys from the store shelves by placing an embargo on the toys, thus removing the hazard, and a recall or corrective action will follow.

The inspectors also look at wooden and plastic toys and will routinely buy samples for lead testing at a laboratory. If the products are found to have a concentration of lead higher than allowed by law, the unit will initiate the embargo and recall process. The Product Safety Unit averages about ten recalls each year on all types of toys.

**Remember, careful toy selection and proper supervision of children is still—and always will be—the best way to protect children from unintentional injuries and poisonings.**



Keeping Connecticut Healthy



To obtain product recall information, please visit the following websites:  
<http://www.cpsc.gov/>

<http://www.recalls.gov/>

<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BRS/Lead/consumer.htm>

Excerpts of this fact sheet were used with permission from the National Center for Healthy Housing. [www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org)

State of Connecticut, Department of Consumer Protection, 165 Capitol Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106-1630 (860) 713-6115  
<http://www.ct.gov/dcp>