

## Connecticut Department of Public Health

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# Fax Cover Sheet

**DATE:** April 21, 2006 **TIME:**

**TO:** Directors of Health **PHONE:**  
Chief Sanitarians **FAX:**  
Lead Contacts  
Lead Consultant Contractors

**FROM:** Alan J. Buzzetti, RS **PHONE:** (860) 509-7299  
Supervising Environmental Analyst **FAX:** (860) 509-7295

**RE:** Children's Pain Reliever, Bebetina – Advisory and Information Sheet

**cc:** LPPCP Staff, Suzanne Blancaflor, Tracey Weeks, Frank Greene

**Number of pages including cover sheet: 2**

### Message:

Please see the enclosed information regarding lead in an Ecuadorian children's pain reliever. The product is called Bebetina.

Bebetina, a children's over-the-counter pain reliever, is manufactured by Schering-Plough in Ecuador. It is being banned for sale in Westchester County, New York by the Department of Health there. Bebetina was recently found to contain high levels of lead after a three-year-old child was identified with lead poisoning. The Westchester County Health Department is requiring that merchants stop selling this product and is warning residents not to give the tablets to children.

While there have been no lead poisoning cases in Connecticut connected with Bebetina, the Department of Public Health is issuing this product advisory. You may contact Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program staff at (860) 509-7299 should you have any questions.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**April 7, 2006**

**Children's Pain Reliever Seized Due to High Lead Content  
Product Sold Under the Brand Name "Bebetina" Not Safe**

Bebetina, a children's over-the-counter pain reliever manufactured by Schering-Plough in Ecuador, is being forbidden for sale by the Westchester County Department of Health because the product has been found to contain high levels of lead after a three-year-old child was identified with lead poisoning. The Health Department is requiring that merchants stop selling this product and is warning residents not to give the tablets to children.

Families who have Bebetina in their household or who have used Bebetina in the past should call the Health Department at (914) 813-5000 for advice on having their children tested for lead poisoning. The Health Department is also interested in obtaining any samples of Bebetina that families may still have to test their lead content. The Health Department has already begun an investigation into where this product is sold and is collaborating with the New York State Department of Health; the New York State Office of Professional Discipline, Pharmacy Branch; and the Food & Drug Administration (FDA).

"We discovered the existence of these lead-containing pills while we were investigating how this child became lead poisoned," said Joshua Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health for Westchester County. "The pills we tested contained .068% lead by weight and were purchased in the Sleepy Hollow/Tarrytown area. From what we know, it appears that Bebetina is sold in foil packets of 12 pills through word of mouth in non-traditional locations. It is also sold in foil packets of two tablets each for about \$4.00," he added. "Since this product is not sold in large pharmacy chains or supermarkets, we are relying on the public for its assistance in helping us locate additional supplies and removing them from the market."

Lead poisoning is a serious illness that affects thousands of children each year and can cause a wide variety of severe health problems. At low blood lead levels, lead can adversely affect a child's ability to learn.

At high levels, lead is an acute poison that can require hospitalization for treatment. Lead poisoning can cause mental retardation, seizures and in severe cases, death. Lead poisoning can be easily detected by a simple blood test. Since lead poisoning can occur without visible symptoms, all children between the ages of six months and six years old should be assessed annually by their pediatricians.

For more information, residents can contact the Health Department at (914) 813-5000 or visit its website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).

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