Toxic Toys:
Playing with Danger

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New York State Pollution Prevention Institute
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Toxic Toys: Playing with Danger
Toxic Toys: Playing with Danger

- US toy safety regulations
- Potential health effects of toxics found in toys
- Why children are more vulnerable than adults
- Toxics that have been found in toys: plastics, metals, make up, wood, fabrics
- Sources for recall and additional toy safety information
Product Safety

• Companies do not have to disclose to consumers what is in their products

• US Consumer Product Safety Commission
  – Charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risk from consumer products
  – Protect from products that pose fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard or can harm children
  – Operates voluntary recall program

• CPSC can’t test toys before sale to ensure they are safe

Toxic Toys: Playing with Danger

recalled due to magnets coming loose, Aug 2007
Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act

US, enacted Jan08 to protect children from lead and phthalate hazards by

1. Reduce lead allowed in children’s products and paints
2. Establish phthalate limit
3. Require product testing to ensure products meet limits

1. **Lead paint ban** strengthened
   1977 limit 600ppm to 90ppm by Aug 2009

2. **Lead in children’s products** is a banned hazardous substance
   600ppm Feb 2009 | 300ppm Aug 2009 | 100ppm Aug 2011

3. **Ban on phthalates** in toys & children’s products
   ✓ Products with DEHP, DBP, BBP higher than 0.1% are permanently banned Feb 2009
   ✓ Products children can put in their mouth with DINP, DnOP, & DIDP higher than 0.1% are provisionally banned Feb 2009

4. CPSC significant funding & staff increases
5. Increased penalties for non compliance

**Toxic Toys: Playing with Danger**
Common Potential Effects from Toxics found in Toys

**Environmental effects**
- Toxic to aquatic environment: potential to affect fish & other wildlife
- Persistent: ability of a chemical to remain in the environment without breaking down, the longer it persists the higher the potential for exposure

**Human health effects**
- Neurotoxicants: cause effects on the nervous system, including confusion, fatigue, irritability, and other behavioral changes
- Reproductive toxicants: cause effects on the reproductive system, including alterations in sexual behavior, decreases in fertility, or loss of the fetus during pregnancy
- Developmental toxicants: cause effects on the developing child, including birth defects, low birth weight, biological dysfunctions, or psychological or behavioral deficits that become manifest as the child grows; can result from maternal exposure during pregnancy, paternal exposure before pregnancy, and postnatal exposure of the child
- Endocrine disruptors

Endocrine Disruption

• Endocrine disruptors: chemicals that may interfere with the body’s endocrine system and produce adverse developmental, reproductive, neurological, and immune effects in both humans and wildlife

• Disruption of the endocrine system can occur in various ways
  – mimic a natural hormone, fooling the body into over-responding to the stimulus (e.g., a growth hormone that results in increased muscle mass), or responding at inappropriate times (e.g., producing insulin when it is not needed)
  – block the effects of a hormone from certain receptors (e.g. growth hormones required for normal development)
  – directly stimulate or inhibit the endocrine system and cause overproduction or underproduction of hormones (e.g. an over or underactive thyroid)

• Natural & man-made substances are thought to cause endocrine disruption
  – Examples: some pharmaceuticals, DDT and other pesticides, plasticizers such as bisphenol A
  – May be found in every day products: plastic bottles, metal food cans, detergents, flame retardants, food, toys, cosmetics, and pesticides


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Children’s Vulnerability

Children are at higher risk of suffering effects than adults

1. Children have greater pound-for-pound intake of air, water, and food
2. Heightened sensitivity as their bodies are growing and developing
3. May not have the same ability to excrete toxins
4. More years of future life left
5. Hand to mouth behavior
6. Greater portion of time spent close to the ground

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Toxics that have been found in Toys

1. Plastics
2. Metals
3. Make up
4. Wood
5. Fabrics

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# Deciphering Plastics

## Preferred

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PETE</th>
<th>Soft drink &amp; water bottles</th>
<th>Recyclable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HDPE</td>
<td>Milk jugs</td>
<td>Recyclable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDPE</td>
<td>Food storage, soft and pliable parts</td>
<td>Recyclable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Reusable microwaveable containers, food storage</td>
<td>Recyclable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Avoid

| PVC | Cosmetics, pacifiers, shower curtains, teething rings, pacifiers, soft toys, portable electronics | Can leach phthalates and lead Not Recyclable Creates dioxin during manufacture & disposal |
| PS  | Packing peanuts; disposable cups, plates, plasticware; Styrofoam | Can leach styrene Recyclable, but not usually recycled Most end up in landfills |

## Uncertain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTHER</th>
<th>Reusable water bottles Can leach bisphenol-A; Not recyclable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Disposable cups Not Recyclable; Can be composted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poly Lactic Acid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Plastics

Hard, shatter proof

Soft, squishy, mouthed

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Polycarbonate & BPA

Bisphenol-A – found in some polycarbonate shatter resistant plastics

- Baby bottles, metal can linings, sippy cups, food storage, thermal receipt paper
- Water soluble
- Heating a container increases BPA leaching into liquid
- Endocrine disruptor
  - Linked to down’s syndrome, obesity, hyperactivity, breast & prostate cancer
  - Causes breast cancer, testicular cancer, and diabetes in laboratory animals at low doses
- Toxic to aquatic environment
- Baby bottles containing BPA banned in Canada, NYS, others

most Playskool products are BPA free

Actions you can take
- Avoid plastic with #7, OTHER, or PC identification for storing foods and drinks and for toys that children put in their mouth
- Avoid heating drinks or food in PC plastic
- Avoid using strong cleaners on PC containers as they release BPA from the plastic
- Choose products labeled “BPA free”
- Call toll free number on product to contact manufacturer and ask about presence of BPA

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BPA Free Products

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Now the whole family can sleep like a baby.

Bisphenol A-free. Phthalate-free. Worry free.
PVC and Phthalates

Phthalates - group of chemicals commonly used as plasticizers, mainly to soften PVC

- Soft toys typically contain 15-20% phthalates
- New shower curtain smell
- Children are at especially high risk as they mouth toys
- Health effects are controversial

Actions you can take

- Avoid plastic with #3 or PVC identification
- Avoid toys labeled “vinyl”
- Avoid soft plastic toys when possible
- Choose products labeled “phthalate free”
- Call toll free number on product to contact manufacturer and ask about presence of PVC

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# Commonly Used Phthalates and their Potential Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Uses</th>
<th>Potential Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEHP</strong> [(di(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate)]</td>
<td>Limited evidence of reproductive toxicity[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wall coverings, tablecloths, floor tiles, furniture upholstery,</td>
<td>Strong evidence of endocrine disruption[^c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shower curtains, garden hoses, swimming pool liners,</td>
<td>Respiratory toxicant[^d]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rainwear, baby pants, <strong>dolls</strong>, <strong>toys</strong>, shoes, automobile</td>
<td>Possible human developmental toxicant[^e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upholstery, packaging film, wire &amp; cable sheathing, medical tubing,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blood storage bags[^a]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PVC can contain 1%-40% DEHP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DBP</strong> (di-n-butyl phthalate)</td>
<td>Human immune system toxicant[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpets, paints, <strong>glue</strong>, insect repellents, hair spray, nail</td>
<td>Strong evidence of endocrine disruption[^c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polish, and rocket fuel[^a]</td>
<td>Possible human developmental toxicant[^e]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limited evidence of reproductive toxicity[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diethyl phthalate</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toothbrushes, automobile parts, tools, <strong>toys</strong>, food packaging,</td>
<td>Human immune system toxicant[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>cosmetics</strong>, insecticides, and aspirin, bind cosmetics &amp;</td>
<td>Strong evidence of endocrine disruption[^c]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fragrances[^a]</td>
<td>Limited evidence of reproductive toxicity[^b]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[^a]: Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Public Health Statements
[^b]: National Library of Medicine, HazMap — Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Agents
[^c]: European Commission on Endocrine Disruption
[^d]: EPA, Hazardous Air Pollutants
[^e]: California, Proposition 65

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# Phthalate Controversy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence <strong>for</strong> phthalate concern</th>
<th>Evidence <strong>against</strong> phthalate concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In animals they have been shown to cause</strong></td>
<td><strong>No documented human illness due to phthalate exposure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Damage to reproductive and endocrine systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Liver and kidney abnormalities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Premature birth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Reproductive defects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Early onset of puberty in girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Harm reproductive system of males</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected – but not yet proven – to cause same effects in humans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mouthing behavior creates unique risk for children</strong></td>
<td><strong>Toy industry say phthalates in toys do not put children at risk as the exposure is too low to do damage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>European Union and California banned 6 phthalates from children’s products</strong></td>
<td><strong>Decision to avoid phthalates is precautionary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US CPSIA limits levels of certain phthalates in children’s toys &amp; articles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phthalate & BPA Exposure

• Phthalates & BPA are not chemically bound to the plastic – this means they can easily leach out of the plastic and into the environment

• Phthalates are highly soluble in oils and leaching is increased when the plastic is heated

• BPA is water soluble and leaching is increased when the plastic is heated (avoid hot liquids and dishwasher), the plastic is cleaned with bleach or ammonia, or the plastic contains acidic material (ie. orange juice)

• Exposure is greater when material starts to show signs of wear and break down

• Children have a greater risk of exposure due to hand to mouth behavior and direct mouth contact

CDC, National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals, Phthalates Fact Sheet, Bisphenol A Fact Sheet
## Avoiding BPA & Phthalates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Better</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby bottles, children’s beverage</td>
<td>Hand wash baby bottles &amp; beverage containers, do not wash in the dishwasher</td>
<td>Replace polycarbonate containers with PETE (#1), PET (#5), or PE (#2 &amp; #4), or stainless steel (some metal containers are lined with epoxy resins, so choose wisely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>containers, food storage containers</td>
<td>Do not store hot liquids in bottles &amp; containers</td>
<td>Replace with PET (#5) or PE (#2 &amp; #4) instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not clean with bleach</td>
<td>Look for containers labeled “BPA free”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replace bottles &amp; containers when they start to degrade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not allow children to chew on containers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycarbonate toys</td>
<td>Do not allow children to chew on toys</td>
<td>Replace toys that are mouthed with safer plastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replace toys when they start to degrade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft plastic toys</td>
<td>Do not allow children to chew on toys</td>
<td>Replace vinyl and PVC toys with PETE (#1), PET (#5), or PE (#2 &amp; #4), or natural materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replace toys that are mouthed and when they start to degrade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid toys labeled #3 or “vinyl”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canned foods</td>
<td>Limit the amount of canned foods you consume each day</td>
<td>Purchase food in glass or paper containers or frozen vegetables in plastic bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoid purchasing canned acidic foods</td>
<td>Look for foods in containers labeled “BPA free”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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PVC Free Retailers & Manufacturers

Comprehensive list at http://www.besafenet.com/pvc/companypolicies.htm
Metals

Lead
Uses: PVC stabilizer; pigmentation in paint, rubber, plastics, ceramics; cheap metal jewelry
Found in: cheap metal jewelry, paint, PVC
Concern: neurotoxicity

Cadmium
Uses: PVC stabilizer, coatings & pigments in plastic and paint
Found in: jewelry, PVC
Concern: developmental effects, known carcinogen

Mercury – banned from novelty products
Found in: PVC stabilizer, batteries
Concern: nerve, brain, and kidney damage; learning disabilities; converts to methyl mercury in the environment which accumulates in fish and other organisms

Arsenic
Uses: PVC stabilizer, pressure treated wood (discontinued for residential & consumer construction in 2003), dye in plastics & textiles, fruit tree insecticide
Found in: wood, textiles, plastics
Concern: known carcinogen, kidney damage

Lead, cadmium, mercury, & arsenic are common PVC stabilizers

Green
1,589ppm lead
282ppm chromium

Red
1,075ppm lead
274ppm chromium
83ppm arsenic

Orange
2,446ppm lead
586ppm chromium
175ppm arsenic
58ppm mercury

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Metals

Tin
Uses: stabilizer for rigid PVC products, catalysts in silicone production, pesticides
Found in: PVC
Concern: organotins toxic at low exposure, cause nervous system damage

Bromine
Uses: flame retardants, most often listed as “brominated flame retardant”
Found in: furniture, textiles, plastic encasing electronics
Concern: persistent and toxic, possible carcinogen, may affect brain development, may cause reproductive problems

Antimony
Uses: catalyst in polyester production, in combination with brominated flame retardants to increase fire resistance
Found in: flame retardant, polyester
Concern: weakly mimics estrogen, high levels can cause fertility problems and lung cancer in animals

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406,510ppm lead
3,847ppm cadmium
red guitar
2,693ppm lead
34,775ppm chlorine
319ppm arsenic
chromium, tin, antimony also detected

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Actions you can take

✗ Avoid PVC based toys
✗ Avoid cheap metal jewelry and toys
✓ Choose fabrics that do not contain brominated flame retardants
✓ Look up toys and products to know what chemicals they may contain

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Make up

- Oct 2011 study of 31 children’s Halloween face paints & make up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products contained COC</th>
<th>Potential effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% contained chromium</td>
<td>some CrI compounds are known carcinogens and reproductive toxins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52% contained cadmium</td>
<td>developmental effects, known carcinogen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52% contained tin</td>
<td>organotins toxic at low exposure, cause nervous system damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29% contained arsenic</td>
<td>known carcinogen, kidney damage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16% contained antimony</td>
<td>weakly mimics estrogen, high levels can cause fertility problems and lung cancer in animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% contained mercury</td>
<td>nerve, brain, kidney damage; learning disabilities; converts to methyl mercury in environment which accumulates in fish &amp; other organisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3% contained lead</td>
<td>neurotoxicity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Wood

• 80% of forests have been destroyed or degraded due to clear cutting for lumber & paper
• Heavy metals often used in paints
• Plywood and particleboard can contain formaldehyde
  – Offgasses from the wood
  – Short term: irritate eyes, skin, and throat; cause nausea and lethargy
  – Over the long term it can cause cancer
  – Look for: pressed wood at edge of toys and puzzle pieces
  – Pressure treated wood play sets can contain arsenic

Actions you can take

❌ Avoid old painted toys as the paint may contain lead
❌ Avoid those not made in the US, Canada, or Europe where standards aren’t strictly enforced
❌ Avoid plywood and particleboard toys & furniture
✔ Choose solid wood with nontoxic paints and finishes – linseed & walnut oils and beeswax are best
✔ Choose wood certified by the FSC or SFI
✔ Look for toys made out of recycled wood

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Pressed Wood & Plywood

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Cotton, Wool, and Other Fabrics

• Traditionally use heavy amounts of herbicides, insecticides, and fertilizers
• Cotton production uses 25% of the world’s insecticides
• Heavily pollute the groundwater
• Most are stain and moth proof – Teflon and Scotchguard
  – Perfluorinated compounds: toxic & persistent
• Brominated flame retardants are commonly used
  – Persistent & bioaccumulative
  – Impair attention, learning, memory and behavior in lab animals

### Actions you can take
- Avoid moth, stain, and fire proof fabrics
- Choose organic, untreated cotton and wool
- Choose nontoxic colorfast dyes
- Choose wool for its natural fire resistance
- Look for fleece dolls and stuffed animals made out of recycled materials

Washington Toxics Coalition, [http://watoxics.org/chemicals-of-concern/perfluorinated-compounds-pfcs](http://watoxics.org/chemicals-of-concern/perfluorinated-compounds-pfcs)
Brominated Flame Retardants

**Road Racers with Play Mat**
By Fun Club
Mat: Bromine 30,831 ppm

**Princess Jewelry**
By Dollar Tree
Necklace: Lead 257 ppm
Bromine 12,550 ppm
Cl/PVC 257,196 ppm
Hair Clip:
Lead 57 ppm
Bromine 25 ppm

**Lightning McQueen Racing Chair**
By Disney
Seat: Bromine 14,905
Mercury 39 ppm
Base: Lead 34 ppm
Bromine 25,562 ppm
Mercury 156 ppm

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To provide better service in alerting the American people to unsafe, hazardous or defective products, six federal agencies with vastly different jurisdictions have joined together to create www.recalls.gov -- a "one stop shop" for U.S. Government recalls.

Follow the tabs above to obtain the latest recall information, to report a dangerous product, or to learn important safety tips.

Recalls on the Go

When you're buying and using products, safety comes first. And now, with this product recalls application, you have vital safety information available whenever and wherever you need it - right on your mobile phone thanks to the RECALLS.GOV mobile application.

Whether you're at your child's day care center or a yard sale, whether you're at a store or at home, you can now type a product's name into your phone and learn immediately whether that product has been recalled because of a safety concern. You can also see photos of recalled products and learn what to do with recalled products in your homes.

Stay informed, stay safe, check for product recalls.
CPSC Voluntary Product Recalls

Categories

1. Child products (not including toys)
2. Toys
3. Household products
4. Outdoor products
5. Sports & recreation products
6. Specialty products

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• Created and maintained by the Ecology Center
• Contains testing results from 5,000+ products in the following categories:
  – Toys: arts & crafts, dolls, games, jewelry, instruments, outdoor, shoes, stacking & sorting, stuffed animals, vehicles
  – Children’s products: activity gyms & play mats, apparel, back to school, backpacks, car seats, dining & bibs, home décor, playstations, push & walkers, rattles, teethers
  – Pets: toys, feeding/watering, beds
  – Cars: lists make & model
  – Apparel & Accessories
  – Home improvement: flooring, holiday lights, wall coverings
• Searchable database of results

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Product Details for Toys

MLB Soft Sport Glove, Bat, & Ball
Franklin Sports Inc.

Manufacturer
Franklin Sports Inc.

Distributor
Franklin Sports Inc.

UPC/EAN
25725223178

Test Method
XRF

Manufacturer Code
025725223178

Test Date/Location
2 February, 2009/CA

Type
Outdoor / Sporting Goods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Chlorine</th>
<th>Cadmium</th>
<th>Arsenic</th>
<th>Mercury</th>
<th>Bromine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>light blue part of</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>189,525</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red part of glove</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>red/white/blue ball</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>328,796</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Note: numbers in this table represent parts per million of the given chemical.

IMPORTANT NOTE: HealthyStuff.org ratings do not provide a measure of health risk or chemical exposure associated with any individual product, or any individual element or related chemical. Follow this link to read more.
Quick Tips Buying Guidelines

Choose
✓ Products made from natural materials
✓ Products labeled “phthalate free” and “BPA free”
✓ Made in the USA, Japan, Canada or Europe
✓ Solid wood instead of pressed wood with nontoxic paints and finishes
✓ Wood certified by FSC or SFI
✓ Organic and untreated cotton, hemp, wool
✓ Brands that have committed to using environmentally friendly or sustainable materials
✓ Call toll free number on product to contact manufacturer and ask about presence of PVC and/or BPA

Avoid
✗ Cheap metal jewelry due to lead content
✗ Old painted toys as the paint may contain lead
✗ Permanent markers and paints
✗ Pressed or layered wood due to toxic glue
✗ Lights and sounds due to small batteries with mercury
✗ Play cosmetics as they often contain heavy metals
✗ Plastic labeled vinyl, #3, or PVC as it typically contains lead and phthalates
✗ Plastic with #7, OTHER, or PC identification for storing foods and drinks
✗ Moth, stain, and fire proof fabrics

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Information Sources

Product Testing: Healthy Stuff [www.healthystuff.org]


Product Recalls & to report an unsafe product: [www.saferproducts.gov]

Washington State Toxics Coalition Safe Start for Kids
[http://www.watoxics.org/safer-products/safe-start-for-kids]

Environment California Stop Toxic Toys
[http://www.environmentcalifornia.org/environmental-health/stop-toxic-toys]

Healthy Child Healthy World [http://healthychild.org]

US PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) [www.uspirg.org/issues/toy-safety]

Environmental Working Group [www.ewg.org]

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