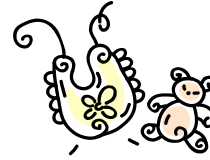


# Rx for Prevention



## Children's Products: Concerns, Hazards, and Actions for Prevention

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### Children's Products Today: Current Hazards

Safety regulation for today's toys inadequately addresses the presence of chemicals linked to harmful health and developmental impacts for children. The Consumer Products Safety Commission has recently announced major recalls on popular toys common in households throughout Washington State. These recalls are in response to the disturbing detection of lead, a potent neurotoxic chemical. In addition, lead has been found in children's lunchboxes, vinyl bibs and raincoats, jewelry, candy, pottery, and other toys and products. The only federal law addressing lead in toys is 30 years old and only applies to lead in paint. For example, there are no restrictions for lead found in vinyl (PVC) products or jewelry. Another pressing concern is the presence of endocrine disruptors such as phthalates in many children's toys and products. *We have an ethical duty and responsibility to ensure that children develop in an environment in which they can reach and maintain their full potential.*

### Key Concern -- Lead

Lead is a heavy metal and proven neurotoxicant to the developing brain at very low levels of exposure. Fetal or early childhood exposure is linked to impaired learning and development, including IQ deficits, language and attention difficulties, and increased aggression and delinquency. Other health effects include decreased growth, decreased hearing acuity, elevated blood pressure, and renal disorders. Low-level chronic exposures to lead are linked to permanent harm.

### Key Concern -- Phthalates

Phthalates, used in common lotions and shampoos, and in vinyl products, are linked to reproductive harm, with male infants especially vulnerable. Studies have also indicated links between phthalates exposures and reproductive harm, including altered testosterone levels for boys and reduced fertility. Phthalate exposures are also linked to respiratory problems.

### Infants and Children: Unique Vulnerabilities

Infants and children are uniquely vulnerable to harmful chemical exposures. Exposures to lead, for example, impact the developing brain, with the potential for damage to development and learning that lasts a lifetime. Studies indicate that low level exposures to toxic chemicals at key developmental windows have the potential to create serious impacts to health and brain development. ***When confronting the possibility of permanent harm, taking preventive action is the only option to protect health.***

### Prescription for Prevention: A Legislator's Role

Legislators have a unique role and opportunity to act upon a Prescription for Prevention and make common products safer for Washington's infants and children. We recommend the following first steps for action:

- ✗ Require that manufacturers of children's products sold in Washington State disclose the chemical content of their products.
- ✗ Require manufacturers of children's products to use safer chemicals and materials.
- ✗ Provide support to businesses to make products without chemicals harmful to our children's health, learning and development.

#### **Signed by:**

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