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## **California Poison Control Observes National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Paint, Jewelry, Candy, Medicines Responsible for Children's Lead Poisoning**

### **San Francisco, CA – October 22, 2010 – California Poison Control System**

(<http://www.calpoison.org>) is observing National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week and warns consumers that lead can be found in a variety of products available to children.

"Lead poisoning is an important cause of learning disabilities, anemia, as well as growth problems, and children exposed to lead may have attention and aggression problems," said Dr. Richard Geller, Executive Medical Director for the CPCS. He added that children are most commonly exposed to lead by ingesting paint chips or dirt that is contaminated with lead, especially if one or both parents have occupational exposure to lead.

Dr. Geller said ways to prevent lead poisoning in children include having them wash their hands frequently, washing their toys often and providing a diet high in iron and calcium. Children who are undernourished can absorb more lead into their bodies than children with well balanced diets. Consumer lead testing kits can be found at most hardware stores and may be of use in detecting lead in the home. For more free poison and safety tips, text the word TIPS or PUNTOS for Spanish to 69866.

Dr. Geller offered the following 10 lead poisoning prevention:

1. Make sure your children do not chew on painted surfaces, such as toys or window sills.
2. Report chipped or cracked paint to your landlord if you live in an older home built before 1978.
3. Cover paint that is peeling or chipping with duct tape until it can be removed.
4. Ask your doctor to test your young children for lead even if they seem healthy.
5. Children's necklaces and bracelets, adult watches, as well as religious jewelry from Mexico, have been found to contain lead.
6. Keys frequently have small amounts of lead in them – do not let babies play with or teethe on your keychain.

7. Run the faucet for a few minutes before using cold water for cooking, drinking or preparing infant formula (this can help flush out the lead which can build up in sitting water), especially if the cold water hasn't been used in the past two hours.
8. Avoid eating foods that are canned outside the United States.
9. Traces of lead have been found in some candy and its packaging imported from Mexico containing chili or tamarind.
10. Folk medicines (especially home remedies) imported from another country also contain lead. These include: pay-loo-ah (fever and rash treatment); azarcon (also called Maria Luisa, Liga, Alarzon, Greta, Coral and Rueda); Asian folk remedies, including Ghasard, Bali Goli and Kandou; and Middle Eastern folk remedies, including farouk and bint al zahab.

Call California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 for more information on lead poisoning. Trained certified pharmacists, nurses and poison information providers to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is free, confidential and interpreters are always available. Become a fan on Facebook at California Poison Control System and follow on Twitter @poisoninfo.

The CPCS has four divisions located at UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, San Francisco General Hospital in San Francisco, Children's Hospital Central California in Fresno/Madera and the UC San Diego Medical Center in San Diego. The CPCS is part of the University of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy and responsible to the California Emergency Medical Services Authority.

### **Note To Media**

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