



BUREAU OF STATE SERVICES

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

IN REPLY REFER TO
FILE NO. SHS-A8

October 9, 1957

AIR MAIL - SPECIAL DELIVERY

Dr. R. A. Kehoe, Director
Kettering Laboratory
College of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Eden Avenue
Cincinnati 19, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

Enclosed are copies of the report of the Ad Hoc Committee which met in Washington on October 7th to evaluate the hazard of lead poisoning from painted toys, and the Surgeon General's press release dated October 8th.

We wish to express our sincere appreciation for your willingness to serve on the committee on such short notice and for your invaluable assistance to us.

Sincerely yours,

Elton S. Osborne, Jr.
Medical Director
Acting Chief, Division of
Special Health Services

Enclosures (2)

KE 0006297

N 7552

REPORT of the AD HOC COMMITTEE
Appointed by the Division of Special Health Services
to EVALUATE THE HAZARD OF LEAD POISONING FROM PAINTED TOYS

Washington, D. C., October 7, 1957

Recent newspaper stories have suggested that death or idiocy could be caused by children's eating paint from toys, especially imported toys, now on sale in retail stores.

No published data currently at our disposal suggest either the direct involvement of painted toys in lead poisoning among children or any alteration in this situation during the last decade. There is, therefore, no occasion for special alarm at this time.

Lead-painted toys, manufactured both here and abroad, have been bought by the American public for generations. If there has been any change in the composition of the paint used on these toys in recent years it has been in the direction of decreased percentage of lead content.

Nearly all cases of lead poisoning in children are reported among those in the age-group one to three who have eaten considerable quantities of lead paint from walls, window-sills, home-painted furniture, or other surfaces accessible to the toddling child, usually in older houses painted with old-fashioned lead paint.

Parents should be alert to the threat of lead poisoning in small children, and should try to prevent the chewing or licking of painted surfaces of all kinds.

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Since, with the best of precautions, it may not always be possible to keep painted objects out of children's mouths it is obviously desirable that the lead content of all interior household paint be reduced to a minimum.

Renewed efforts in public health education, designed to bring home to the public the hazards of lead poisoning in general - especially those hazards created by the accessibility of wall surfaces and children's furniture painted with old-fashioned lead paint - efforts along these lines by the public health and medical professions would be highly desirable.

KE 0006290

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Public Health Service
Washington 25, D. C.

DOTEN--EX 3-6300
Ext. 3678

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, October 8, 1957

Dr. Leroy E. Burney, Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, issued the following statement concerning the potential hazard of lead poisoning from children's toys.

"Recent public statements have suggested that paint used on toys, especially imported toys, now on sale in retail stores constitutes a serious health hazard to American children.

"The Public Health Service, in response to numerous inquiries, has studied this matter with the informal assistance of a group of consultants who are experts in lead poisoning. From our own studies and the report of the consultants, we have found there are no published data which suggest either the direct involvement of painted toys in lead poisoning among children or any alteration in this situation during the last decade. There is, therefore, no occasion for special alarm at this time.

"Concerning the allegation that toys of foreign manufacture were especially dangerous in this connection, Public Health Service tests and tests by State and city laboratories have revealed no significant differences among the toys tested between domestic and foreign toys in the matter of lead content of paint.

"Painted toys, manufactured both here and abroad, have been bought by the American public for generations. If there has been

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any change in the composition of the paint used on these toys in recent years it has been in the direction of decreased percentage of lead content.

"Nearly all cases of lead poisoning in children are reported among those in the age-group one to three who have eaten considerable quantities of lead paint from walls, windowsills, home-painted furniture, or other surfaces accessible to the toddling child, usually in older houses painted with old-fashioned lead paint.

"Parents should be alert to the threat of lead poisoning in small children, and should try to prevent the chewing or licking of painted surfaces of all kinds.

"Since, with the best of precautions, it may not always be possible to keep painted objects out of children's mouths, it is obviously desirable that the lead content of all interior household paint be reduced to a minimum.

"Renewed efforts in public health education, designed to better acquaint parents with the hazards of lead poisoning in general - especially those hazards created by the accessibility of wall surfaces and children's furniture painted with old-fashioned lead paint - efforts along these lines by the public health and medical professions would be highly desirable."