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There are reports of lead poisoning in children from old and discarded lead storage battery casings. These casings are a cheap source of fuel in the home; the fumes and ashes contain lead, and they are poisonous.

The combination of pica and available lead paint is certainly a diagnostic clue and calls for further investigation.

Diagnosis

A history of pica is enough to raise a suspicion of lead poisoning.

The onset of the disease is often insidious. Lack of appetite, vague abdominal pain, slight listlessness or increased irritability, constipation, and occasional vomiting may appear to parents to be the consequences of "too much hot weather," "worms," and a host of other minor ailments. However, it is just in this guise that the disease may appear.

On the other hand, the child may develop convulsions suddenly with no previous convulsive history. In this case, unless the convulsions are intractable or the post ictal depression is prolonged, the physician may be misled by such deceptive clues as a "head in-

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