

Preventing Lead Poisoning

LETTER: How ignorant can one be? Two of my children were being poisoned daily right before my own eyes and I didn't suspect it.

My young daughter began complaining of stomach cramps when school started. I thought it was an excuse for not wanting to go to school. I kept sending her anyway. One day the teacher sent her home because she was in such pain.

My young son also had occasional cramps but his main complaint was feeling tired all the time. He wouldn't go out and play with his friends after school. He lost appetite, became skinny and suffered from constipation.

At last my husband and I decided it was time to get medical help. We took both of them to our pediatrician. He took some blood tests and immediately made a diagnosis of lead poisoning.

He is going to prescribe some special medicine to help get the lead out of their systems. Meanwhile, I am writing to alert other parents whose children might be suffering from chronic lead poisoning.

Too often what seem like excuses not to go to school conceal some serious trouble.

ANSWER: Yours is a timely warning which I know will be helpful. Thanks for writing. I want to add something to what you have said.

It's about the possible source of the (lead poisoning). It is likely that your doctor asked whether or not there is old paint in your home. Either on a porch, the sides of an old barn (if you live in the country) or on the walls inside or outside of your house.

Old paint becomes flaky. It contains large amounts of lead. Children eat flakes of paint from walls and window sills, for example, and it all adds up to chronic lead poisoning (plumbism). The newer paints contain little or no

Doctor Says

Dr. Peter Steincrohn



is early and not wait for a bluish line to form in the gums. In severe cases, lead poisoning may cause convulsions and unconsciousness.

For Mrs. T.: With your son's history of so many ear infections why not ask his doctor if he should be allowed to continue swimming as much as he does?

Perhaps, until infections are under more control, he should not go swimming for a while. According to one recent report, "Swimmers run a risk of ear infections that is about five times as great as that of nonswimmers."

Once chronic anxiety takes hold, it often refuses to loosen its grip without a fight, says Dr. Steincrohn in his booklet, "What To Do For Chronic Anxiety." For a copy send 50 cents and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

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Poisoning Imperils Brant, Geese

As if an oil spill on the Delaware River Dec. 27 and threat of starvation because of the prolonged freeze weren't enough, Delaware wildlife officials have raised the possibility of a new waterfowl calamity this winter: lead poisoning.

"The birds we have lost seem to have succumbed to lead poisoning," said Lloyd Alexander, wildlife management supervisor for the Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife. "They are not dying strictly of starvation."

More than 1,000 Canada geese, 150 brant and 50 to 100 ducks, mostly mallards, are believed to have died of lead poisoning, aggravated by severe weather and limited food supplies.

Alexander said 14 brant were autopsied and all 14 showed lethal doses of lead in their systems. A federal wildlife laboratory in Wisconsin examined

samples taken from the Canada geese and confirmed they died of lead poisoning, Alexander said.

Waterfowl pick up spent lead shot as they feed and obtain grit in the water at heavily hunted locations.

All of the Delaware's major publicly owned waterfowl hunting areas prohibited the use of lead shot last fall and a statewide lead shot ban is almost a certainty next season for blinds within 150 yards of water.

Vernon Stotts, Maryland waterfowl program director, said starvation is not a problem for most ducks and geese in his state so far.

He said biologists are watching for lead poisoning in a flock of some 50,000 Canada geese in the Bohemia River area. These birds trade between there and Middletown, Del., where lead poisoning occurred in previous years, Stotts said.

'Rheumatism Pills' Poison Patient

San Francisco — (UPI) — Chrysanthemum brand "rheumatism pills," imported from Hong Kong caused at least one case of lead poisoning, doctors at Stanford University said.

Drs. Johnson B. Lightfoot and H. Joseph Blair said they found the pills to be the source of lead poisoning.

Lead Studies Link Risk to Batteries

Washington — Children who live in the ghetto and eat lead-based paint flaked from the walls are not the only ones in danger of lead poisoning, federal disease detectives have learned.

Workers in battery factories bring home enough lead dust on their clothes to contaminate their residences and cause elevated levels of lead in their children's blood. Excess-

sive blood-lead can cause mental retardation.

The link between the father's occupation and the child's blood-lead levels was made in Bennington, Vt., last fall, according to "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report," a publication of the U.S. Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

More than half of 27 battery work-

ers' children had elevated amounts of lead in their blood, while 5 had significantly high levels. Children with fathers not in the battery industry had much lower levels of lead.

The report points out that there are "approximately 250 such (storage battery) plants in the United States, which employ from 50 to 250 workers each."