

March 18, 1943

Mr. R. R. Read,
Lambert Pharmacal Company,
St. Louis, Missouri.

Dear Mr. Read:

In reply to your letter of March 10, I am glad to give you the best information that is available to me. Very little work has been done in recent years on the subject of the absorption of inorganic compounds of lead through the skin. The chief reason for this is that there has been no practical need for such investigation. It is generally accepted on the basis of practical observations and a limited amount of experimental work that the inorganic lead compounds are not absorbed through the skin to any appreciable extent. There are a few compounds that can produce illness and fatal results as the result of skin absorption alone. These compounds, however, are organic liquid lead compounds that owe their absorption to the fact that they are highly soluble in fats. The inorganic compounds are absorbed in only two important ways, namely, (1) after inhalation as finely divided dust, fumes or spray and, (2) after being swallowed.

From these facts, it is apparent that any lead exposure which your operators may have will be the result of the contamination of their hands, with the subsequent contamination of food, tobacco, cigarettes, or other objects that are introduced into the mouth. (I take it from what you said that there is little likelihood of there being lead-bearing dust in the air. If there should be any doubt on this score, the matter should be investigated.) Therefore, if suitable precautions are taken against swallowing lead compounds, you should have no difficulty whatever.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

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LAMBERT PHARMACAL COMPANY

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

RESEARCH LABORATORY

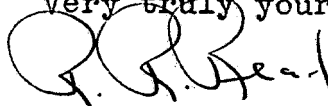
March 10, 1943

Kettering Laboratory
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

Gentlemen:

We are packaging certain materials for military use in collapsible lead tubes. Although these tubes are protected by lithographed ink and wax, the operators still get a certain amount of black stain on their fingers. If work has been reported on the possibility of lead absorption or poisoning as a result of the handling of metallic lead, it will be appreciated if you can direct us to the publication.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. R. Read', written over the typed name.

R. R. Read

RRR:V