PLAINTIFF'S
EXHIBIT
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Children's sandboxes can be dangerous

Post Press

Until recently, few people suspected that asbestos caused chronic lung inflammation, let alone death. At the present time, thanks to responsible coverage in the media, we now know that protracted inhalation of asbestos fibers can cause such horrible diseases as mesothelioma, pulmonary carcinoma and pulmonary fibrosis in humans and animals.

Local institutions have experienced the harsh reality of the financial cost of removal of old asbestos from hospitals, schools and the workplace. Nevertheless, it is now recognized and accepted that no price is too high to pay to rid us of this lethal substance.

Now another type of asbestos threat has surfaced, one so insidious as to make the tragedies of the past pale in comparison. Asbestos is turning up in a most unlikely place: children's sandboxes!

In a letter to the editor of the New England Journal of Medicine (October 1986), Dr. Mark Germine of the New Jersey Medical School warns of the presence of tremolite asbestos in crushed-limestone play sand sold by a major home-supply chain. The brand he named is Kiddies Fun Sand, Quikrete Co., and it can be found on the shelves of several local stores.

Dr. Germine's tests showed that there existed in one bag of Kiddies Fun Sand a tremolite content of 2.15 percent. Quoting from Dr. Germne's letter, "A dense cloud of dust is produced by pouring the sand, and under play conditions, considerable inhalation of the dust, as well as contamination of skin, clothing and the household environment, was observed. Dust from the product contained a large proportion of particles meeting the legal criteria for asbestos fibers. While New Jersey law prohibits the use of products for spray insulation that contain more than 0.25 percent asbestos, there are no laws to prohibit the use of asbestos in play sand!"

This is unconscionable.

It is difficult to know where to begin when we suspect something of being wrong. I would caution against panic, and I certainly would not suggest boycotting a suspected product without further investigation, but perhaps it is parents who should take the responsibility of asking pertinent questions. We cannot permit the problem to reach epidemic proportions before we become alarmed. If we wait, it may be too late to turn back the clocks of many children.

This is very simply a case of "better safe than sorry."

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