

January 15, 1962

Mrs. L. D. Fox
2036 Stanton Road
East Point, Ga.

Dear Mrs. Fox:

An examination of the pellet referred to in your letter of January 2nd and mine of the 12th, demonstrated that it is made of steel. It presents no problem of toxicity. It is not a good plaything for a small child, however, for if it is put into the mouth, which is likely, it may be drawn into the respiratory tract and into the lung. This happens all too frequently to small children who hold marbles or other small solid objects in the mouth. A sudden gasp, or sharp intake of air in preparation for a cough, or in crying, carries the object into the larynx.

I think I should point out to you that what I have said above would be equally true if the pellet had been made of lead or solder or some other lead-containing alloy. Such an object, when swallowed, passes through the alimentary tract in a day or two, with only a very minute loss of dissolved substance. Swallowed shot do not cause lead poisoning on this account. It was my opinion, however, that we should examine the pellet before commenting on its potentialities for harm.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK:ss