Many Hand-me-down Plastic Toys Are Toxic for Kids

Kids who play secondhand plastic toys might be exposed to dangerous levels of substances such as lead and cadmium. At low levels, these compounds may be hazardous to children that are subjected to them over a protracted time period, especially if children chew on toys.

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Investigators analyzed 200 secondhand plastic toys that they found in houses, nurseries and secondhand stores. Researchers found high concentrations of poisonous elements such as antimony, barium, bromine, cadmium, chromium, selenium and lead in several building blocks, amounts and items of jewelry which were normally either yellow, black or red. Toys included cars, trains, action figures, blocks, and puzzles – all of which were small enough to be chewed by young kids.

> *The findings confirm the presence of relatively large concentrations of chemicals which have since been restricted or banned, including the brightly colored pigments cadmium sulphoselenide and lead chromate." – Andrew Turner, environmental researcher at University of Plymouth.*

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To evaluate the number of compounds in the toys, investigators used what is called X-ray fluorescence spectrometry, a procedure that scientists frequently use to ascertain what substances are in stones, minerals, sediments and fluids. Researchers also did extra tests made to simulate gut conditions by placing toys in a hydrochloric acid solution. Under those circumstances, several toys published amounts of

bromine, cadmium, or lead which exceeded limitations allowed beneath bunny safety regulations in Europe.

Young children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of the chemicals because children have faster metabolisms than adults along with the growth and development of organs and cells.

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Example: yellow and red Lego bricks in the 1970s appeared like Legos in the 1990s, but the old variants contained cadmium that was not present in the more recent ones.

The findings imply that parents must be careful about used plastic toys since they might contain banned chemicals that can leech out readily when children chew on them, ” stated Dr. Luz Claudio, a medical health researcher in the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in nyc.

The stricter regulations that limit chemicals in toys do not apply retroactively to older toys,” Claudio, not involved in the analysis

Sources:

- *Hand-me-down plastic toys may not be good for kids – Rueters*
- *Concentrations and Migratabilities of Hazardous Elements in Second-Hand Children’s Plastic toys* – Environmental Sciences and Technology