

Protect children from lead and cadmium in toys and household goods

Nearly one in 20 children in Minnesota have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Challenge

Lead and cadmium are neurotoxins that can cause serious long-term health impacts. These impacts can include neurological, reproductive, and developmental effects. As public awareness of these health effects increases, some manufacturers have shifted to cadmium as a replacement for lead in inexpensive jewelry. If ingested, large amounts of cadmium may cause acute cadmium poisoning. In addition, breathing high levels of cadmium can severely damage the lungs and cause death.

Proposal

The proposal restricts the use of lead and cadmium in toys and jewelry and expands the list of regulated goods to include other items used by children and pregnant women, such as dishes, cosmetics, personal care products, school supplies, and other products. The proposal also clarifies enforcement responsibilities for this section of law. The policy proposal accompanies a request of \$74,000 annually from the Environmental Fund to cover the costs of staff, supplies, and equipment required to monitor compliance, conduct enforcement activities, and educate retailers, manufacturers, and consumers about the issue.

Why it's important

Exposure to harmful neurotoxins can have irreversible, lifelong consequences, and families may be unaware of the risk posed by household products until exposure has already occurred. Despite efforts to curb the use of these metals in consumer goods, data shows that children continue to be at risk of exposure to lead and cadmium at unacceptable levels.

For more information

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