

Did You Know?

What's in Your Jewelry

It is difficult for most of us to think of our jewelry as anything more than necklaces, bracelets, rings, and earrings. Whether we are buying for ourselves or for someone else, we do not normally imagine that something as simple as jewelry could contain anything that might prove to be harmful or even lethal. So what is this mystery substance that could be in your jewelry? It is lead, and here is what you need to know about it.

The Story

In March 2007, Ward B. Stone tested some of his children's jewelry bought at dollar stores. He made a startling discovery: all stores sold jewelry containing lead without warning labels. Samples sent to Edison Laboratory in Schenectady were found to be made up of at least 380,000 parts per million or higher— over 600 times the established limit of 600 parts per million, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Where Is Jewelry Like This Found?

Dollar stores are all across the nation and jewelry brought there could potentially be in any home. Children ages 3-16 are most likely to have jewelry like this and are also most susceptible to the dangers of lead, since these ages are in a critical time for neurological development. Despite a recall of almost 150 million pieces of jewelry by the CPSC, jewelry containing lead continues to be sold. A study published in the Bulletin of the Environmental Contamination and Toxicology found that the majority of jewelry bought from big chain stores leached enough lead to cause minor neurological damage with just 20 seconds of daily contact.

It is not just children's jewelry that contains dangerous levels of lead. Fashionable adult jewelry including cultured pearls from China, necklaces from New York & Co, and several other popular brand names have been found to contain lead. A lot of jewelry, whether it is inexpensive and playful, or from a brand name company, has the potential to be leaded. It is important to be aware of the dangers and do a little research on brand names before buying.

The information from this "Did You Know" was found at:

http://www.healthyschools.org/CEH_fact_sheet_lead_in_childrens_jewelry.pdf

This was brought to you by the Resource/Referral program at EWC as part of a bi-weekly awareness project. R/R is located in the basement of Wilder Hall or you can reach us at 545-0883. For more informational sheets and Everywoman's Center details, please visit <http://www.umass.edu/mycenter>.