

CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CENTER OF THE HUDSON VALLEY
PROTECTING CHILDREN AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

www.ChildrensEnvironment.org

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CADMIUM FOUND IN CHILDREN'S JEWELRY

Jan. 1, 2010: Parents recently learned about another potential risk to their children's health: Inexpensive charm bracelets and pendants designed for small children. The Associated Press recently documented that some inexpensive jewelry made in China may contain cadmium, a toxic metal. Exposure to high amounts or even long term exposure to low doses of cadmium have been linked to cancer, kidney damage, and perhaps may hinder normal brain development in young children. A day after the Associated Press report, the top U.S. consumer safety regulator warned Asian manufacturers not to substitute other toxins for lead in children's charm bracelets and pendants.

Ironically, it appears that manufacturers have substituted cadmium in their manufacturing process after lead was prohibited by law in the United States in 2008. The toxic effects that may result from children ingesting lead are well established, but the effects of cadmium on young children have been less studied.

Regulators and lawmakers reacted swiftly to the AP report, which found that some Chinese manufacturers have been using cadmium, sometimes at extraordinarily high levels. Lab tests were conducted for the AP on 103 pieces of low-price children's jewelry such as charm bracelets and pendants purchased around the country. 12% had significant amounts of cadmium, and in some of the pieces, levels were extremely high.

Children could potentially ingest significant amounts of cadmium by sucking or biting their jewelry. Some of these items may easily shed cadmium. As is true with so many toxic substances, exposure in young children may have significantly greater consequences, since their brain is still developing and their body's ability to handle such toxic exposures is less mature.

The government restricts the amount of cadmium in drinking water and regulates workplace exposure, but thus far, there are no regulations regarding cadmium in jewelry.

Cadmium is a soft metal that occurs naturally in soil. It comes in many forms, and is an ingredient in yellow pigments, batteries and plastics. People can be exposed to cadmium not only from water or in the workplace, but sometimes it can be found in foods, particularly shellfish, liver and kidney meats. Cadmium is also found in cigarette smoke.

[Dr. Robert Amler](#), the Dean of the [School of Health Sciences and Practice](#) at New York Medical College is on the staff of the Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley. He has urgent advice for parents: "Until we know much more about the scope of this problem, parents should consider removing all inexpensive jewelry from their children, particularly young children likely to put these items into their mouths."

The Children's Environmental Health Center was founded in 2008 and is a joint project of the faculty at New York Medical College and the physicians at the [Maria Fareri Children's Hospital](#) at Westchester Medical Center. More information about the center can be found at www.childreneworld.org.

[Dr. Allen J. Dozor](#), Director of the Center, emphasizes that the federal government needs to move swiftly in determining the extent of the problem and what additional consumer safety laws may be required to protect our children. “Retailers as well as parents urgently need direction on how to respond to this latest news.”

With office locations conveniently located in Westchester County and several other sites in the Hudson Valley, the [Children's Environmental Health Center of the Hudson Valley](#) provides clinical consultations for children and their families by appointment.

Visit www.ChildrensEnvironment.org or call (914) 493-7585 for more information.