



PVC DOLLS



WHAT IS POLYVINYL CHLORIDE (PVC)?

PVC plastic, commonly referred to as “vinyl” (although not all vinyls are PVC), is a type of plastic. It is found in many consumer products including: raincoats, rain boots, upholstery and seat covers, shower curtains, carpet backing, clear plastic backpacks, plastic bags, inflatable swimming pools, beach balls, dolls, bath books, toy rubber duckies, and infant teething toys. Lead and other heavy metals are added to PVC during formation making it a health concern.



WHAT ARE SOME SAFER ALTERNATIVES?

The safest option is buying dolls and toys that are 100% PVC and phthalate free (phthalates are a class of chemicals that are used to make PVC plastic soft and flexible). Dolls made of natural materials like cotton and wool are healthier for children. Often, these dolls are machine washable, making them easy to clean.

Whenever possible, parents and child care professionals should opt for PVC and phthalate free dolls to minimize harmful exposures to children.

WHAT SHOULD I BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR?

In order to distinguish between the different types of plastic that are on the market, products will sometimes have a small symbol - usually located on its underside. The number inside of the three triangles describes what type of plastic was used to make that item.

One way of actively searching to avoid products made with PVC is to look for the Recycling Code #3.



WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED?

Lead and other heavy metals are added to PVC during its creation to help stabilize the plastic. It is well known that lead is a neurotoxicant that can be harmful to cognitive abilities, especially in young children.

Heavy metals have been linked with a variety of harmful health effects, ranging from gastrointestinal to neurological disorders, depending on the type of metal. They cannot be destroyed by incineration; therefore, during the PVC disposal process, these harmful heavy metals are released into the environment.

HOW CAN CHILDREN BE EXPOSED?

Young children have the natural tendency to mouth soft plastics, which can lead to exposure to PVC through ingestion. Chewing on a plastic toy creates small openings in the plastic, providing an avenue for leaching of chemicals from the toy into a child's mouth. Normal wear and tear can also release PVC. New dolls or small tears in older dolls may cause off-gassing of toxic chemicals from PVC.

The best way to protect children from the harmful effects of vinyl dolls is to get rid of them. If eliminating all vinyl dolls is not an option, then removing them from infant and toddler rooms is a good alternative, because this age group has the greatest tendency to mouth toys.



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