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News Release

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NEW PRODUCT TESTS FIND LEAD IN LIPSTICK; Levels up to six times FDA limit for lead in candy

Local Health Professionals and Public Health Advocates Urge Action

October 11, 2007 -- Toys made in China aren't the only products laced with dangerous heavy metals: lipstick manufactured in the US and used daily by millions of American women also contains surprisingly high levels of lead, according to new product tests released today by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. The lead tests were conducted by an independent laboratory over the month of September on red lipsticks bought in Boston, Hartford, San Francisco and Minneapolis. Top findings include:

- More than half of 33 top brand-name lipsticks (61%) tested contained detectable levels of lead, with levels ranging from .03 to .65 parts per million (ppm). None of these lipsticks listed lead as an ingredient.
- One third of the tested lipsticks exceeded the .1 ppm FDA lead limit for candy – a standard established to protect children from directly ingesting lead. Lipstick products, like candy, are directly ingested into the body. Nevertheless, FDA has not set a limit for lead in lipstick, which fits with the disturbing absence of FDA regulatory oversight and enforcement capacity for the \$50 billion personal care products industry.
- The good news is, the tests show it is possible to make lipstick without lead: 39% of lipsticks tested had no detectable levels of lead, and cost doesn't seem to be a factor. Some less expensive brands such as Revlon (\$7.49) had no detectable levels of lead, while the more expensive Dior Addict brand (\$24.50) had higher levels than some other brands.

Higher lead-containing samples included:

- L'Oreal Colour Riche "True Red" -- 0.65 ppm
- L'Oreal Colour Riche "Classic Wine" -- 0.58 ppm
- Cover Girl Incredifull Lipcolor "Maximum Red" --0.56 ppm
- Christian Dior Addict "Positive Red" -- 0.21 ppm

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Lead is a proven neurotoxin that can cause learning, language and behavioral problems such as lowered IQ points, reduced school performance and increased aggression. Pregnant women and young children are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure. Lead easily crosses the placenta and enters the fetal brain where it can interfere with normal development. Lead has also been linked to infertility and miscarriage.

“The intergenerational affects of lead are underappreciated, and it is well known that it causes adverse health effects at any level of exposure,” said Dennis McBride, MD, Director of Health for the City of Milford.

“Lead builds up in the body over time and lead-containing lipstick applied several times a day, every day, can add up to significant amounts,” said Mark Mitchell, MD, President of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice.

“The cosmetics industry needs to clean up its act and remove lead and other toxic ingredients from their products,” said Stacy Malkan, author of the just-released book “Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty industry.”

“Repeated, daily exposures to low levels of lead add up – and they add up on top of lead from paint and drinking water, which is especially a problem in low income communities. There’s no excuse for lead in lipstick or toys. Companies should act immediately to reformulate lead-containing products,” Malkan said.

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is calling on the industry to reformulate products to remove lead, to require suppliers to guarantee that raw materials are free of lead and other contaminants, and to join the campaign in demanding that the FDA regulate personal care products.

“Federal authorities have clearly dropped the ball on this issue, and it's time for state level action to pull women and families out of harm's way,” said Phil Sherwood of the Connecticut Citizen Action Group. “We urge our state legislature to take steps to ensure the safety of common household goods like lipstick and toys,”

The full report, “A Poison Kiss: The Problem of Lead in Lipstick,” is posted at www.SafeCosmetics.org

Read more about the urban legend of lead in lipstick at www.NotJustaPrettyFace.org

The Coalition for a Safe & Healthy CT (CSHC) is a growing alliance of citizens, health professionals, workers, environmental justice groups, educators, and others, seeking preventive action on toxic hazards. CSHC is calling on state policy makers to require that companies use safer alternatives to toxic chemicals when they are available. www.safehealthyct.org

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