



ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHY TOMORROW

HealthyToys.org

The Consumer Guide to Toxic Chemicals in Toys



ATTN TV Reporters: B-Roll and Interviews in Spanish Available Upon Request

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Consumer Guide to Toxic Chemicals in Toys to be Released for 2008 Holiday Shopping Season

**Leading Environmental Health Groups Tested More than 1,500 Toys
for Lead, PVC, Cadmium, and Other Harmful Chemicals**

Groups Call for Passage of Safer Alternatives Bill

In response to the overwhelming demand for information about toxic chemicals in toys, the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow is teaming up with the Michigan-based Ecology Center in releasing their second annual guide to help parents make informed decisions this holiday season. In addition to listing the toxic chemicals found in some children's toys, the newly redesigned site – www.HealthyToys.org -- will contain features such as a personalized holiday wish list that can be sent to family and friends, and a blog-friendly widget to quickly search for toy ratings. The Ecology Center and allied organizations tested over 1,500 of this year's most popular toys.

Local event details:

When: Wednesday, December 3rd, 10:00 AM

Where: Church on the Hill, 140 Bowdoin Street, Beacon Hill, Boston, MA 02108

Who: Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
Representative Frank Smizik (D-Brookline)
Senator Steven Tolman (D-Brighton)
Local parents

Visuals: Examples of safe and unsafe toys purchased in Massachusetts
XRF Handheld Analyzer

*****ATTENTION JOURNALISTS: Advance access to toy rankings on an embargoed basis and interviews with experts are available upon request. *****

“This site was so popular last year that we realized parents are hungry for more information about the chemicals used to make their children’s toys,” said the Ecology Center’s Jeff Gearhart, who spearheaded this project. “With consumers paying more attention, toy manufacturers are being forced to respond.”

At www.HealthyToys.org parents are able to easily check how products rank from highest to lowest in terms of lead, cadmium and other chemicals that are associated with developmental and learning disabilities, hormone problems and cancer. Toys made with PVC, or polyvinyl chloride, were also tested because they often contain phthalates and other hazardous chemical additives. Babies and young children are the most vulnerable to toxic chemicals since their brains and bodies are still developing and because they commonly put toys into their mouths.

Last year the massive public attention to the issue of toxic chemicals in children’s toys prompted Congress to overhaul the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) and restrict lead and phthalates in toys beginning in early 2009. “While these reforms are a step in the right direction, they do not go nearly far enough,” said Gearhart. “When it comes to protecting the health of our children, we shouldn’t take any chances.”

To sample the toys experts used a portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analyzer that identifies the elemental composition of materials. This accurate device has been used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to screen packaging; the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to screen food; National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for planetary exploration; and many State and County Health Departments to screen for residential lead paint.