

TOXIC TREATS

California and U.S. health officials have detected dangerous levels of lead in 112 distinct brands of candy – most of them made in Mexico. One in four candy and wrapper samples have come up high since 1993, records show. But much of this information about tainted candy has been kept from parents and public health workers.

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER
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CANDIES THAT TESTED WITH DANGEROUS LEVELS OF LEAD

- 1 Tama Roca**
Tested high 28 of 143 times
- 2 Bolirindo**
Tested high 18 of 35 times
- 3 Chaca Chaca**
Tested high 17 of 38 times
- 4 Vero Rebanaditas**
Tested high 15 of 51 times
- 5 Pelon Pelo Rico**
Tested high 11 of 59 times
- 6 Tablarindo**
Tested high 11 of 60 times
- 7 Serpentinias**
Tested high 9 of 20 times
- 8 Vero Mango**
Tested high 9 of 38 times
- 9 Brinquitos**
Tested high 8 of 12 times
- 10 Rollito de Tamarindo (Dulmex)**
Tested high 8 of 18 times
- 11 Lucas Limon**
Tested high 7 of 7 times
- 12 Margarita Dulce de Tamarindo**
Tested high 7 of 7 times
- 13 Pica Limon**
Tested high 7 of 9 times
- 14 Lucas Acidito**
Tested high 7 of 13 times

OTHER CANDIES THAT TESTED HIGH

Candy	Times tested high	Total times tested
Dinochews	6	7
* Vero Elotes	6	18
Indy Hormigas	5	5
* Picarindo Brand Tamarind Candy	5	5
Limon 7	5	11
Milkoko	5	18
Chaca Chaca Rielito	4	4
* Licona Tamarind	4	4
Vero Super Palerindas	4	4
Rocarindo	4	5
Canel's Gum	4	13
La Colonial Dulce de Tamarindo	3	3
Arcor Frutilla	3	4
Pulpitas	3	6
Rollito de Coco (Dulmex)	3	6
Vero Palerindas	3	6
De la Rosa Paleta	3	9
Pico Diana	3	12
Montes Tomy	3	20
Vero Pica Gomas	3	27
Cachitos	2	2
Chupas Locoboyos	2	2
Indy Picazo	2	2
Naranjito	2	2
* Storck Eucalyptus Menthol	2	2
Taco Loco	2	2
Super Strawberry	2	3
Vagabundo	2	3
Aldama Obleas con Cajeta	2	4
Fosforin	2	4
Melon con Chile	2	4
Montes Dany	2	4
Pokémon	2	4
Super Lucas Hot'n Spicy Chili Mix	2	4
Taman Zela con Chile	2	4
Adams Family Thing	2	5
Pollito Asado	2	9
Piña Loca (Altano)	2	10
Besos Ricos	2	14
Pulparindo	2	16

*State issued health advisories on these candies
NOTE: Results include candy tests conducted or logged by the FDA, Department of Health Services and The Orange County Register.
NOTE: Candies are not shown to scale.
The complete list of tested candies can be found online at www.ocregister.com/investigations/lead/

AVOIDING LEAD

Tainted candy is cited as a potential source of lead poisoning in Orange County nearly as often as paint, but there are numerous ways children can be exposed to lead.

IN CANDY

In wrappers

Candy wrappers are printed with inks that contain lead. The lead is hazardous because it can leach into candy, or children can lick or eat the wrappers.

In chili

Chili often is not cleaned before it is milled, so dirt, which has lead, is thrown into the mix.

In glaze

Candy is sometimes packaged in small clay pots. To give these pots a shiny look, they are covered with a glaze called greta, which contains lead. Lead leaches into the candy.

In tamarind

Tamarind is sticky, and lead from pesticides, fertilizers or dirt can attach to it.

OTHER SOURCES

Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust: are still the top sources of lead poisoning.

Hobbies: making stained-glass windows.

Work: recycling or making automobile batteries.

Drinking water: lead pipes, solder, brass fixtures and valves can all leach lead.

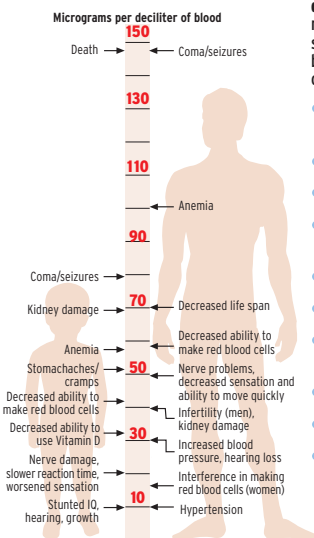
Home health remedies: azarcon and greta, which are used for upset stomach or indigestion; pay-loo-ah, which is used for rash or fever.

Other possible sources: ceramic pottery from other countries, dinner plates, cribs painted with lead-based paint, imported silver jewelry, bicycle handle covers, children's shoes, crayons.

SOURCE: Dept of Health Services, The Register

HOW LEAD AFFECTS YOU

Studies show that long-term exposure to lead can affect a child's developing nervous system. Health effects of different blood-lead levels in a child compared to an adult:



SOURCE: Register research
Graphic by Molly Zisk, The Register

WHERE TO FIND HELP

There are two basic tests that your doctor can perform. They require a pinprick or an intravenous blood draw.

Blood lead-level test:

- Identifies the amount of lead in your blood at the present time.
- Estimates level of exposure.

Zinc protoporphyrin test:

- Shows the lead exposure over the last 3- to 4-months.
- Measures how much of the blood-forming process has been interfered with by lead.
- Measures the actual harmful effect lead has had on the body.

Information by phone and on the Internet.

California Department of Health Services/
California Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch
(510) 622-5000

California Department of Health Services Food & Drug hotline. To report foods with lead sold in the United States
(916) 322-2632

National Lead Information Center
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/about/about.htm
(800) 424-5323

ONLINE The Register's six-part investigation into lead in candy can be found on the Web at www.ocregister.com/investigations/lead/