

Lead Levels In Lipstick Alarming High

A recent study conducted by the U.S Food And Drug Administration (FDA) reveals that over 400 popular lipstick brands contain twice as much lead as previously believed - up to 7.19 parts per million (ppm). Mark Mitchell, M.D., MPH, policy advisor of the Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice and co-chair of the Environmental Health Task Force for the National Medical Association comments: "Lead builds up in the body over time and lead-containing lipstick applied several times a day, every day, can add up to significant exposure levels."

Maybelline Color Sensation, by L'Oreal USA, was found to have the most lead of all the brands that the FDA tested, with 275 times more than the brand with the lowest amount of lead - Wet & Wild Mega Mixers Lip Balm. The Wet & Wild lip balm happened to be the least expensive, which shows that a high-priced lipstick does not mean it is safe.

Sean Palfrey, M.D, a professor of pediatrics and public health at Boston university and medical direction of Boston's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program explains: "Lead is a proven neurotoxin that can cause learning, language and behavioral problems. Pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure, because lead easily crosses the placenta and enters the fetal brain where it can interfere with normal development."

The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics sent a letter to the FDA requesting they they change the "misleading statements" on the FDA website in terms of the safety regulations regarding lipstick, because the FDA has merely reported the levels of lead contained in lipstick, but has not analyzed the actual safety and health consequences of dangerous ingredients in the popular makeup.

Currently, the FDA website claims there is not a safety concern in the amount of lead found in lipstick. Their website says: "We have assessed the potential for harm to consumers from use of lipstick containing lead at the levels found in both rounds of testing. Lipstick, as a product intended for topical use with limited absorption, is ingested only in very small quantities. We do not consider the lead levels we found in the lipsticks to be a safety concern. The lead levels we found are within the limits recommended by other public health authorities for lead in cosmetics, including lipstick."

The U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued an announcement in January stating no amount of lead is a safe one, and they urge people to be diligent in stopping women who are pregnant and children from being exposed to it.

Janet Nudelman, interim director of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics and policy director at the Breast Cancer fund says: How many millions of women have applied and reapplied lead-containing lipsticks since we first raised concerns about this problem five years ago? How many kids have played with their mom's lipstick? It's time for L'Oreal to get the lead out of its products, and for the FDA to set a safety standard for lead in lipstick."

The FDA is now working on determining if it is necessary to make a maximum limit for lead to be allowed in lipstick, and the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics is pushing them to do so, saying the smartest thing to do would be to limit the lead amount to the smallest amount possible that the companies can accomplish. They are also telling L'Oreal is it time to take action in regards to changing their products containing lead. John Kerry and Dianne Feinstein, U.S Senators, have also taken an interest in this matter and are hoping the FDA will take a stand in reducing the amount of lead in lipstick (MNT 15-2-12).