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30th Annual Survey Finds Dangerous Toys on New York Store Shelves

Shopping Tips Can Help Parents Shop Safely

New York, NY– Dangerous or toxic toys can still be found on America’s store shelves, according to [the New York Public Interest Research Group](#)’s 30th annual *Trouble in Toyland* report. The survey of potentially hazardous toys found that, despite recent progress, consumers must still be wary when shopping this holiday season.

The report reveals the results of laboratory testing on toys for toxic chemicals, including chromium and phthalates, both of which can have serious, adverse health impacts on a child’s development. The survey also found examples of toys that pose a choking hazard, loud toys that can threaten children’s hearing, and powerful toy magnets that can cause serious injury if swallowed.

“We should be able to trust that the toys we buy are safe. However, until that’s the case, shoppers need to watch out for common hazards when purchasing toys,” said Rob Kornblum, consumer advocate and Staff Attorney with NYPIRG.

For 30 years, the NYPIRG *Trouble in Toyland* report has offered safety guidelines for purchasing toys for small children, and provided examples of toys currently on store shelves that pose potential safety hazards. Over the years, *Trouble in Toyland* reports have led to over 150 recalls and other enforcement actions.

“Our leaders and consumer safety agencies need to do more to protect our youngest consumers from the hazards of unsafe toys – no child should ever be injured, get sick, or die from playing with a dangerous toy,” said Amaris Aviles, a parent and student at Borough of Manhattan Community College.

Key findings from the report include:

- Toys with high levels of toxic substances are still on store shelves. We had chemical testing done at a lab which is accredited by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
 - We found the Fun Bubbles jump rope from Dollar Tree which had 10 times the legal limit of the banned phthalate DEHP (tested at 10,000 ppm), and also had 190,000 ppm of the toxic phthalate DIBP which has not yet been banned. However, the CPSC has

- proposed a rule which has not been finalized that would add DIBP to the list of banned phthalates – a rule we believe the CPSC should finalize.
- In preliminary tests, we also found high levels of the heavy metal chromium in three toys. The high content of chromium in the products we found doesn't necessarily mean that they violate the law. We believe it is a cause for concern, and we call on the CPSC to do further testing.
 - Positively, while the CPSC has recalled some toys for lead violations this year, our tests did not find any. We believe this is a sign of progress, but this does not mean that lead cannot be found in other toys.
- Despite a ban on small parts in toys for children under the age of three, we found toys available in stores that still pose choking hazards. We found a fairy wand from Dollar Tree that has small parts that easily break off, but was not labeled as a choking hazard.
 - We found inadequate warning labels in the Disney Pixar Cars Riplash Racers and Disney Planes from Marshalls and K-Mart, G2 Air Mini Football from Five Below, a Disney Finding Nemo Dory figurine from Five Below and Dollar Tree, and a Nickelodeon Mermaid Dora the Explorer from Target. These products may have labels suitable for foreign countries, but they were not sufficient to meet U.S. standards.
 - Small balls pose a hazard for young children who are inclined to put objects in or near their mouths. We found Magic Towels packaged as a small baseball and a small football at Dollar Tree which did not have the appropriate small ball warning label.
 - Balloons pose the most serious choking hazard to children in the U.S. All of the balloon packages we found did include the required warning label reading that children under eight can choke on balloons and balloon parts. However, we found three balloon sets from Party City which included a second, confusing label indicating that the products are for children ages three and older: the Balloon Animal Kit, Mega Value Pack 16 Latex Punch Balloons, and Mega Value Pack 12 Water Bomb Packs.
 - We also found toys that are potentially harmful to children's hearing. We found the Vtech Go! Go! Smart Wheels, Vtech Go! Go! Smart Animals, Vtech Spin & Learn Color Flashlight, Fisher Price Click n Learn Remote, and Leap Frog Fridge Phonics Magnetic Letter Set from Babies 'R Us, Family Dollar, K-Mart, Lot Less, Stop & Shop, Target, TJ Maxx, Toys 'R Us, and Walmart that, while they don't violate federal standards, were found to be extremely loud at the ear and at a distance.
 - We continue to find small, powerful magnets that pose a dangerous threat to children if swallowed. We found Sizzlers noise magnets from Family Dollar and Singing magnets from Dollar Tree and Stop & Shop that are "near-small-parts" which, while they don't violate federal standards, are small enough to be swallowed and can cause severe internal damage.

Over the past seven years, stronger rules have helped get some of the most dangerous toys and children's products off the market. Rules put in place by the 2008 Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act tightened lead limits and phased out dangerous phthalates. Earlier this year, the CPSC implemented a ban on small, powerful toy magnets which is also an important step forward. However, not all toys comply with the law, and holes in the toy safety-net remain.

"As a parent raising a young child, it's easy to feel overwhelmed with the amount of toys on store shelves and the hazards some may present," said Diana Fryda-Mihailovich, a Manhattan parent of a 10 month old. "For the holidays, safe shopping and my child's health are at the top of my list."

We tested for toxic chemicals at a CPSC-accredited lab. Other tests are completed under expert direction. The validity of our research methodology is amply demonstrated by the fact that the

CPSC and toy manufacturers have taken at least 150 actions—recalls, stop sales, etc.—over the years in response to our annual toy safety report.

To download our full *Trouble in Toyland* report, click [here](#) or go to our website at www.nypirg.org. Parents can find our list of unsafe toys, as well as tips for safe toy shopping this holiday season, at toysafetytips.org.

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The New York Public Interest Research Group Fund (NYPIRG) is New York State's largest student-directed research and advocacy organization. NYPIRG is a nonpartisan, not-for-profit group established to effect policy reforms while training students and other New Yorkers to be advocates. Through research, public education and outreach, we serve as counterweights to the influence of powerful special interests that threaten our health, safety or well-being.