



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang  
Consumers Association of Penang  
檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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**Press Statement**

**22 October 2024**

**CAP: Strictly Enforce Legislation on Lead**

The Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) calls on the authorities to strictly enforce the existing legislation on lead and at the same time promulgate a law that would eliminate lead in paint.

The call is made in view of our latest test conducted on toys, personal accessories, cosmetics and spices. Out of 40 samples tested more than 20 samples were found to contain lead. A sample of eye cosmetic was found to contain lead almost 1000 times above the permitted level.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized 20–26 October 2024, as the International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to raise awareness and promote actions to address the health impacts of lead exposure, especially on children, pregnant women and workers. The theme for 2024 is “Bright Futures begin Lead Free”.

In conjunction with this occasion, CAP sent 40 samples of various products and spices to an independent laboratory to test the amount of lead present. The results are as follows:

- \* Spices: Nine out of 25 samples were found to contain lead above the permitted level. One sample of Chilli powder was found to contain more than eight times the permitted level of lead. The Fourteenth Schedule (Regulation 38) of the Food Regulation 1985 only allows 2 ppm (parts per million) to be present in curry powder and spices.
- \* Cosmetic products: Four out of 8 samples tested were found to contain lead above the permitted level. Out of which, 2 samples of eye cosmetics were found to contain exceedingly high levels of lead. One sample had 196,996 ppm and another 125,688ppm of lead. The Guidelines for Control of Cosmetic Products in Malaysia only allows 20ppm of lead to be present in cosmetic products.
- \* Accessory: All 6 samples of accessories (bangles and hair pins) tested were found to contain lead. One sample of a bangle was found to contain more than 300 ppm of lead.
- \* Toy: A sample of toy car was also found to contain lead.

Lead is a cumulative toxicant that affects multiple body systems. It is particularly hazardous to young children and pregnant women however, lead is harmful to all who are exposed.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “there is no safe level of exposure to lead that is known to be without harmful effects.” The health impact of lead is well-recognised as it affects the neurological, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and haematological systems.

Young children are particularly vulnerable as they have unique pathways that can lead to higher exposures than adults. In addition, lead can cause irreversible damage to the developing brain which can last for the rest of the child's life, such as reduced intellectual ability.

When adults are exposed to high levels of lead it can increase reproductive problems, hypertension and decrease immune function. Lead is also damaging to the kidneys and the central nervous system.

The issue of lead has been taken by CAP in the past as our previous tests conducted on eye cosmetic and infant formula detected high levels of lead in the samples tested.

CAP has also been calling on the government to promulgate mandatory standards for lead in paints as our tests on decorative paints in the past found high levels of lead.

Despite wide recognition of the harmful effects of lead and actions in many countries, exposure to lead, particularly during childhood, remains a key concern to healthcare providers and public health officials worldwide.

In view of the dangers of lead, CAP calls on the authorities to strictly enforce the existing legislation on lead and at the same time promulgate law that would eliminate lead in paint.

As lead paint elimination is gaining momentum globally, the Malaysian government should expedite to promulgate and enforce law to eliminate lead in paint.

Malaysia should not be complacent. As lead has a strong and detrimental impact on children, immediate action needs to be taken to safeguard our future generation.

**Mohideen Abdul Kader**  
**President**  
**Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP)**