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.

TOXIC TREATS

CANDIES THAT TESTED WITH DANGEROUS LEVELS OF LEAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candy</th>
<th>Times Tested</th>
<th>Total Times Tested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tama Roca</td>
<td>18 of 463 times</td>
<td>239 of 652 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaca Chaca</td>
<td>10 of 38 times</td>
<td>12 of 38 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vero Rebanaditas</td>
<td>5 of 30 times</td>
<td>5 of 30 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serpentinas</td>
<td>10 of 40 times</td>
<td>10 of 40 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brinquitos</td>
<td>11 of 32 times</td>
<td>11 of 32 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rollito de Tamarindo (Dulmex)</td>
<td>6 of 18 times</td>
<td>6 of 18 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Limon</td>
<td>10 of 67 times</td>
<td>10 of 67 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucia Dulce de Tamarindo</td>
<td>7 of 7 times</td>
<td>7 of 7 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pica Limon</td>
<td>13 of 61 times</td>
<td>13 of 61 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucas Acidito</td>
<td>13 of 63 times</td>
<td>13 of 63 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AVOIDING LEAD

Tainted candy is chile 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 in wrappers, children’s silver jewelry, bicycle and other lead-based paint, imported dinnerware, and lead-containing fixtures and valves can leach lead.
- Drinking water: Drinking water can contain lead, which is thrown before it is milled, so dirt, dust, and lead-contaminated food or water.
- Other possible sources: Ceramic pottery from other countries, dinner plates, crock painted with lead-based paint, imported silver jewelry, bicycle handle covers, children’s shoes, crayons.

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:

- Symptoms to look for:
  - Decreased appetite
  - Fatigue
  - Irritability
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Tremors
  - Headaches
  - Abdominal pain
  - Vomiting
  - Constipation
  - Weight loss

WHERE TO FIND HELP

There are two basic tests that your doctor can perform. They require a pipette or an infrared bone scan.

1. Blood lead test:
   - Identifies the amount of lead in your blood at the present time.
   - Estimates level of exposure.
   - Dose prophylaxis test:
     - Shows the lead exposure over the last 1 to 4 months.
     - Measures how much of the blood-forming process has been interrupted with lead.
     - Measures the actual harmful effect lead has had on the body.

ONLINE

The Register’s soft investigation into lead in candy can be found on the Web at www.scripps.com/investigations/lead/