



Lead in Home Remedies

Home remedies and traditional medicines are used around the world and are thought to help some health problems. However, some of these home remedies contain lead and may make you very sick. You cannot tell by looking at or tasting a remedy if it has lead in it. Imported cosmetics may also contain lead. Imported home remedies and medicines can sometimes help cure sick people.

THESE HOME REMEDIES HAVE BEEN FOUND TO CONTAIN LEAD:

Latin American community:

- **Azarcon**, a bright orange powder also known as Rueda, Coral, Maria Luisa, Alarcon, and Liga; and
- **Greta**, a yellow powder.

Both Azarcon and Greta are given for "empacho" (intestinal illness). Both Azarcon and Greta may contain very high levels of lead.

Hmong community:

- **Pay-loo-ah**, a red powder given for rash or fever.

Asian Indian communities:

- **Ghasard**, a brown powder given as an aid to digestion;
- **Bali Goli**, a round bean dissolved in "gripe water" and used for stomach aches;
- **Kandu**, a red powder used to treat stomach aches;
- **Kohl (Alkohl)**, a powder used both as a cosmetic eye make-up and applied to skin infections and the navel of a newborn child;
- **Sindoor**, a brightly colored ceremonial powder; and
- **Surma**, a black cosmetic used on the eyes and also as a teething powder.
- **Some Ayurvedic medicines**

Why is lead dangerous?

Any person can become lead poisoned, but children younger than 6 years old and pregnant women are at a higher risk. Lead is a poison that can harm the brain, kidneys, and other organs especially in children. Even a small amount of lead in a child's body can impact their development, making it hard for them to learn, pay attention, and behave.

Most children with lead poisoning do not look or act obviously sick. When they do show signs of lead poisoning, their symptoms can include tiredness, sleeplessness, stomach ache and vomiting. Very high levels of lead can cause seizures, coma, and even death.

A pregnant woman can pass lead to her unborn child. The baby can be born too small or too early. If a pregnant woman's lead level is very high, there is a higher chance of a miscarriage.

What can I do if I have taken or have given my child a home remedy that has lead?

Call your doctor, clinic or local health department for more information or for help with treatment for lead poisoning right away. Call your health department at 707-784-8070 to arrange for a free blood test to determine if there is lead in your home remedies. Medical information is confidential. Your health is the main concern. You can also call the California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 or visit their website at www.calpoison.org for more information. They are available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, and 365 days a year to answer your questions and help in an emergency. Language interpreters are available.

For more information, contact the Solano County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (707) 784-8070.

