



Lead in Imported Ceramics

What should I look for?

Lead may be in the paint or glaze of a ceramic dish. Two warning signs that lead is present are:

1. Color

Colorful ceramics painted red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, or black may contain lead.

2. Rough or raised surface

Ceramic dishes that contain lead often feel rough and chalky or have raised surfaces, but even dishes with smooth and shiny surfaces may have lead.

What can I do to prevent lead poisoning?

The only way to be certain that your dishes do not contain lead is to test them. Many hardware stores and some pharmacies sell lead-testing kits.

Do not use any ceramic tableware that you know contains lead on the inside or outside. This is the *best* way to prevent lead poisoning from this source. Inexpensive alternatives include dishes made of plastic, or lead-free ceramics. Many of these safe dishes come in patterns and colors similar to dishes containing lead.

What other tips are there for preventing lead poisoning?

1. Do not store food or drinks in dishes that may have lead. Over time, lead can pass from tableware into food.

2. Do not serve acidic or hot food in dishes that may have lead. Acidic foods like lemons and salsa and hot drinks like coffee, while not dangerous themselves, can pass lead into food.

3. Do not use heat or microwave food in dishes that may contain lead. Heat can cause lead to pass from a dish into food.

What is Proposition 65 and the yellow triangle about?

There are two laws which set standards for how much lead is allowed to be in dishes. One is federal, set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The other is for California, and was set by the California voters in Proposition 65. The California law is much stricter. Dishes that meet the FDA standards, but not California's, should be marked with a yellow triangle. However, not all manufacturers use the yellow triangle. You can ask the salesperson if the pattern you want meets the Proposition 65 standards. For more information, contact the Solano County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (707) 784-8070.



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