

# HealthyToys.org

The Consumer Guide to Toxic Chemicals in Toys



**\*ATTN TV Reporters: B-Roll and Interviews in Spanish Available Upon Request\***

**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE**

**CONTACT: For A Better Bronx**

**Marian Feinberg 718-292-4344**

**cell 917-569-0992**

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## **Second Annual Consumer Guide to Toxic Chemicals in Toys to be Released for 2008 Holiday Shopping Season**

**Leading Environmental Health Groups Tested More than 1,500 Toys  
for Lead, PVC, Cadmium, and Other Harmful Chemicals –  
Results to be Released on Wednesday, December 3 at [www.HealthyToys.org](http://www.HealthyToys.org)**

**Bronx and National Groups Call for Fundamental Overhaul of Toxic Product Laws  
Bronx Press Conference to be held at Bruckner Plaza near Toys R Us at 11 AM  
Location: Bruckner Expressway and White Plains Road, Soundview**

In response to the overwhelming demand for information about toxic chemicals in toys, the Michigan-based Ecology Center is releasing their second annual guide to help parents make informed decisions this holiday season. In addition to listing the toxic chemicals found in some children's toys, the newly redesigned site – [www.HealthyToys.org](http://www.HealthyToys.org) -- will contain features such as a personalized holiday wish list that can be sent to family and friends, and a blog-friendly widget to quickly search for toy ratings. The Ecology Center and allied organizations tested over 1,500 of this year's most popular toys.

The report will be released in the Bronx by the local Environmental Justice organization, For A Better Bronx, along with its Montefiore physician partners in the South Bronx Environmental Justice Partnership. "Last year, with all the talk in the news, many parents here in the Bronx were confused about what toys were safe to buy for their children. This year it can be very difficult because many families are also facing hard times to buy any holiday presents for their children. We want parents, and those charities that donate toys, to be able to give children toys that are healthy and safe for them to play with." said Marian Feinberg of For A Better Bronx. "When consumers are informed and act together, toy manufacturers and political leaders are increasingly being forced to respond." This event is part of a New York Statewide release by the JustGreen Partnership, which advocates for stronger consumer and worker protections and substitutions for toxic chemicals on a statewide level.

At [www.HealthyToys.org](http://www.HealthyToys.org) parents are able to easily check how products rank from highest to lowest in terms of lead, cadmium and other chemicals that are associated with developmental and learning disabilities, hormone problems and cancer. Toys made with PVC, or polyvinyl chloride, were also tested because they often contain phthalates and other hazardous chemical additives. Babies and young children are the most vulnerable to toxic chemicals since their brains and bodies are still developing and because they commonly put hands and toys into their mouths.

Last year the massive public attention to the issue of toxic chemicals in children's toys prompted Congress to overhaul the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) and restrict lead and phthalates in toys beginning in early 2009. "While these reforms are a step in the right direction, they do not go nearly far enough," said Jeff Gearhart of the Ecology Center. "When it comes to protecting the health of our children, we shouldn't take any chances."

To sample the toys experts used a portable X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analyzer that identifies the elemental composition of materials. This accurate device has been used by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to screen packaging; the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) to screen food; National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for planetary exploration; and many State and County Health Departments to screen for residential lead paint.

In conjunction with the national release of HealthyToys.org media events will be taking place in several states around the country on Wednesday Dec. 3 including New York, Washington, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Minnesota, California, Michigan and Oregon. Please visit <http://www.healthytoys.org/events.php> for detailed information about events in each state.

**\*\*\*ATTENTION JOURNALISTS: Advance access to toy rankings on an embargoed basis and interviews with experts are available upon request. Please call Shayna Samuels at 718-541-4785 or Glenn Turner at 917-817-3396 for more information. \*\*\***