

FDA: Yes, lots of lipsticks contain lead

September 5 2009, By Siel Ju

The good news: After a long, tight-lipped silence, the U.S. Federal Drug Administration tested lipsticks for lead -- a move that eco-nonprofit organizations like Campaign for Safe Cosmetics have been calling for years. After all, Campaign for Safe Cosmetics' 2007 study found lead in 61 percent of the 33 lipsticks tested -- despite the fact that lead wasn't listed as an ingredient in any of them!

The bad news: The [FDA](#) found [lead](#) at levels four times higher than even what Campaign for Safe [Cosmetics](#) Found!

The really bad news: The FDA won't name names -- despite admitting that three specific manufacturers had the highest levels of lead in their lipsticks. And as of yet, the FDA has no standard for lead in [lipstick](#) -- so toxic lipstick's fair game.

How much lead are we talking? Well, the FDA found lead in all 20 lipsticks it tested -- with the average level being 1.07 ppm -- a level 10 times higher than the FDA's 0.1 ppm limit for lead in candy, which doesn't bode well for kids who might use a parent's lipstick while playing dress up. Even scarier, the highest lead level the FDA found was 3.06 ppm!

Despite the fact that some cosmetic industry people say lipstick can't be made without lead, lead-free lipsticks are already on the market. In fact, health-conscious companies like Lavera have lipstick trade-in offers to entice you away from the contaminated lipsticks (www.lavera.com/special-offers/26-newsletter/123-lipstick-challenge).

To keep your lips lead-free, look for lipsticks specifically labeled lead-free or consult Environmental Working Group's Skin Deep cosmetic safety database (ewg.org/) when shopping. Of course, lipstick-free living's also a good option; try organic lip balms.

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