

# Dollar Tree left recalled apple sauce pouches on store shelves too long, FDA says

June 19 2024, by Robin Foster



After a recall was issued last year for lead-tainted applesauce pouches linked to illnesses in over 500 children, the discount retailer Dollar Tree failed to remove all products from store shelves for too long, federal officials said Tuesday.

In a [warning letter](#) sent to the company, the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration said WanaBana apple puree products remained in stores in several states through late December, two months after Dollar Tree was first told about the recall.

Officials at the Virginia-based company told the agency that it refused sales of the products at registers, but the FDA said that was "not an effective measure" because at least one child in Washington state ate a recalled fruit pouch in a store before a purchase was made.

The recall effort first began in October 2023, when WanaBana recalled its fruit pouches over concerns about lead and chromium contamination. Chromium is a carcinogen, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As a seller of the pouches, Dollar Tree was notified of the recall. However, subsequent checks of stores "revealed that you continued to offer the recalled WanaBana Apple Cinnamon Fruit Puree pouches on [store](#) shelves well after the recall was initiated, despite FDA's numerous attempts to bring this serious issue to your attention," the agency said in its [warning letter](#).

"Exposure to lead at the levels found in the WanaBana Apple Cinnamon Fruit Puree pouches could result in acute lead toxicity," the agency added. "Lead is toxic to humans and can affect people of any age or health status; children are particularly susceptible to lead toxicity due to their low body weight."

"Failure to adequately address this matter may result in [legal action](#), including, without limitation, seizure and injunction," the agency concluded.

Dollar Tree officials told the Associated Press Tuesday that new management is taking steps to develop a process "for quickly and

effectively executing product recalls." The company operates more than 16,000 discount stores in 48 states.

So far, children in 44 states have [had probable or confirmed](#) cases of elevated [blood lead levels](#) after eating the applesauce pouches, according to the CDC. The outbreak was [declared over in April](#).

Anyone who consumed the recalled pouches should consult with a health care provider, the CDC said. There is no safe level of lead consumption, the agency stressed, as it can cause serious learning and behavior problems in children.

Short term exposure to lead can cause headaches, abdominal pain/colic, vomiting and anemia. Long-term exposure could lead to irritability, lethargy, fatigue, muscle aches or muscle prickling/burning, constipation, difficulty concentrating/muscular weakness, tremor, and weight loss, the CDC says.

Because these pouches have a long shelf life, they may still be in consumers' homes, so the FDA continues to advise that the pouches be thrown away.

**More information:** The CDC has more on the [fruit pouch recall](#).

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