Green is for Dolls . . .

Not only is this the “most wonderful time of the year,” but it is also the most toy buyingest time of the year. As little ones dream big about their holiday hauls, it would be wise to urge them towards green dolls. Not green complected dolls, no wicked witches nor dolly grinches. Ecologically green dolls, those that are not made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), will ensure healthier hours of play. Santas everywhere can feel confident in gifting young children with dolls made of cloth.

Both hard and soft-bodied vinyl or plastic dolls pose a risk to their adoptive “moms” and “dads” in that phthalates or lead may be used in the manufacturing process to render the plastic either more pliable or, conversely, more rigid. Lead, of course, poses a neurological risk, while phthalates are most closely associated with hormonal and reproductive disorders. Vinyl chloride itself contains carcinogens.

Exposure to phthalates and lead occurs directly, when a youngster chews on PVC products, or indirectly, when a PVC product becomes abraded or the surface otherwise damaged, leading to chemical offgassing. Dolls, alas, are only one of a variety of toys made of PVC. Among the many troublesome vinyl and plastic playthings, both bathtub duckies and bath books are common PVC culprits. Those toys that see bathtub time—and warm water “swims”— are likely to incur lead and chemical leaching. Dolls, of course, often serve as childhood bathtub companions . . . .
The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, which became effective in February 2009, decimated, drastically, the use of phthalates and lead in American-made children’s toys. [Statute available online at: https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/pdfs/blk_pdf_cpsia.pdf].

However, 2016 data* revealed that 88 percent of all toys purchased in the United States were actually manufactured in China, rendering PVC products suspect for lead and phthalate content.

One possible way to discern whether a plasticized product is actually constructed of PVC is to check for a recycling code. Those items that display the #3 code are, in fact, PVC and are not able to recycled. The caveat is that many foreign-made products may carry only the country of origin and fail to include a recycle code. Prudent advice would be to use caution on any vinyl or plastic toy without a recycling symbol, particularly when that toy is intended for an infant or a very young child.

Speaking of holiday purchases, this time of year always prompts caution in selecting stocking stuffers. Cheap, imported toys and jewelry items, such as those available in dollar outlets, often contain lead, cadmium, and other substances of concern. Old-fashioned edible treats, such as clementines and chocolates, are always safer choices.
In the United States, everyone knows the “jolly old elf” as Santa, but what names do friends in other countries assign the bearded man in red?

Residents of the United Kingdom address Santa as Father Christmas, while the French and Belgians use the name, Pere Noel (which translates as Father Christmas). In Germany, he is known as Weihnachtsmann, in Hungary, as Mikulas, and, in Italy, as Babbo Natale. Those in Poland call him Swiety Mikolaj, and Russians address Santa as Ded Moroz (which translates as “Christmas Frost”). Norwegians call Santa Julenissen, which means “Christmas Gnome in English.”

About reindeer: “Live Science” reports that these beloved animals can, in fact, have a red nose . . . !

Sources:


Names for Santa Around the World. Retrieved from:
https://www.factmonster.com/people/people-fun-facts/names-santa-around-world

NorthJersey.com
Wishing you and yours health, happiness, and togetherness this holiday season and throughout the new year.

Let me know how I can help educate your community about lead poisoning prevention!

BONNIE HINDS
bhinds@utk.edu
865-974-8178