



One of the staff members at the school came to me with some important information that she found out about soft vinyl lunchboxes. Below is a shortened version of just some of the information that can be found on this topic.

## A Back to School Warning:

### Children's Vinyl Lunch Boxes Can Contain Dangerous Levels of Lead

Common soft plastic lunchboxes can contain an unwanted poisonous metal, lead. The Center for Environmental Health has been testing lunchboxes for lead since last summer and has found lead in popular brands of vinyl lunchboxes. The level of lead in one lunch box, an Angela Anaconda box made by Targus International, tested at 56,400 parts per million (ppm) of lead, more than 90 times the 600 ppm legal limit for lead in paint in children's products. Initial independent laboratory testing commissioned by CEH last year found seventeen lunch boxes with high lead levels. Since then, a number of leading lunch box manufacturers, including InGear and Fast Forward, have agreed to reduce or eliminate the amount of lead in their lunchboxes. In most cases, the highest lead levels CEH found were in the lining of lunch boxes, where lead could come into direct contact with food. Lead is known to be harmful to children even in minute amounts, as it can impair brain development and cause other behavioral and developmental problems.

Children may be exposed to lead from lunch boxes when they eat food that has been stored in them. Handling the lunchboxes just before eating could also be an exposure risk.

It is not possible to tell by appearance whether a vinyl lunch box may contain lead, so CEH is advising parents to avoid vinyl lunch boxes altogether. Parents can also cheaply and easily test vinyl lunchboxes for lead; for information visit

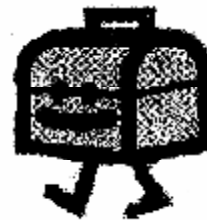
[www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm#test](http://www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm#test).

Photos of some of the lunch boxes can be found at

[www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm#photos](http://www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm#photos).

The majority of lunchboxes that CEH tested do not contain lead. However, at this time the only way to know for sure is to test the lunchbox yourself. You can test vinyl lunchboxes using a hand-held lead testing kit available at most hardware stores. Most brands turn a bright pink color when they are rubbed on a surface containing lead. A clear or orange swab means there is not lead. Parents should rinse the test solution off of a negative box before re-using it.

\*\*The above article, "Lead in Children's Lunch boxes" was taken from the Center for Environmental Health website. The entire article, dated August 15, 2006 can be viewed at [www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm](http://www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm).



**Keep Lunch Safe!!  
Check out your  
child's lunchbox  
today!!**