

LEAD IN SPICES



Lead is a highly toxic metal. It is especially harmful for young children because they are still growing and developing. Exposure to lead can lead to many different health issues, such as:

- Brain and nervous system damage
- Slowed growth and development
- Hearing and speech problems
- Learning and behavior issues

Unfortunately, many items can contain lead. Even items you might not expect. **One way children can become exposed to lead is through spices.** Spices make our food delicious, but they also might contain lead. Food contaminated with lead is dangerous for people to eat. There are certain spices that are more likely to be contaminated with lead, such as:

- curry
- turmeric
- masala
- chili powder
- cinnamon
- tamarind
- coriander
- kviteli kvavili (yellow flower or Georgian saffron)
- svanuri marili
- adjika



Lead may be added to spices on purpose to increase their weight or make the color more vibrant. Other times, spices are accidentally contaminated with lead. This can happen if there is lead in the soil where the spices are grown, or if there is lead in the equipment used to process the spices.

Make delicious meals while staying safe from lead exposure:

- Only use spices purchased in the United States. Spices purchased outside of the United States are more likely to contain lead.
- Avoid using spices purchased outside the United States or spices in unlabeled or unmarked containers.
- Ask a health care provider to give your child a blood lead test if you have been cooking with spices from outside the United States.



Learn more:
www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/

