



## News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **District Orders Lead-Contaminated Candies Pulled From Store Shelves** "Cease and desist" order bans the display and sale of certain imported candies and seasonings

LAS VEGAS - Feb. 17, 2006 - The health district has issued a "cease and desist" order to prevent the display and sale of certain types of imported Mexican candies and seasonings, which have been found to contain levels of lead considered harmful to children. The products were identified through a collaborative testing effort between the Clark County Health District Environmental Health Division and researchers with the UNLV School of Public Health. These products include:

- Lucas ® products in the form of powders and salts
- Candies made in Mexico that contain chili
- Tamarind Candies in glazed ceramic containers from Mexico
- Tama Roca Candy (Tamarind with or without chili) with straws from Mexico

"Parents who have already purchased any of these products are strongly advised not to allow children to consume them," said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer.

The products have been readily available in area grocery stores, swap meets, other wholesale and retail food establishments, mobile vendors and a variety of special stores. The health district environmental health staff is currently inspecting stores to ensure compliance with the order, and is working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to limit the importation and distribution of the affected products in Clark County.

"Research conducted by the health district and UNLV indicates unsafe levels of lead in the affected candies, and in straws, sticks and other packaging materials used in their distribution," said Dr. Shawn L. Gertzenberger, associate professor and graduate coordinator for the UNLV School of Public Health. "The action to remove the candies from area store

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shelves is designed to prevent potential long-term, permanent effects of lead poisoning in children who may consume these products.”

Young children absorb lead far more easily and rapidly than adults. Additionally, the developing nervous systems of young children are more susceptible to the adverse effects of lead, which include: anemia, abdominal pain, constipation, decreased appetite, diarrhea, learning problems, lowered IQ, sleeplessness, tiredness and vomiting.

For additional information, including English/Spanish fact sheets on lead poisoning and pictures of contaminated and potentially-contaminated candies, the public may visit the health district website at <http://www.cchd.org>.

*Editors: UNLV staff will be available through noon for interviews. Health district staff will be available throughout the day.*

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