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# HEALTH CARE AGENCY/PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH *INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN*

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DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH SERVICES  
714 P STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

## STATE WARNS OF HONEY AND PACIFIER DANGERS

SACRAMENTO--State Health Director Molly Joel Coye, M.D., M.P.H., today warned consumers that honey should not be given to infants under a year old because it can cause a severe and potentially fatal disease known as infant botulism. Doctor Coye warns consumers that honey-filled pacifiers are likely to tear, leak or fall apart during use, exposing infants to the honey. In addition, pacifiers that fall apart during use can cause a fatal choking hazard to infants and young children.

Honey may contain the spores of Clostridium botulinum bacteria. In an infant's intestinal tract, these spores can develop and produce the deadly toxin that causes infant botulism. The signs of infant botulism include increasingly severe weakness, constipation and difficulty in breathing. Prompt medical care is essential to treat infant botulism.

Honey-filled pacifiers are made in Mexico in various colors including blue, pink, ivory, yellow, and white. They are approximately three inches long with a one and one-half inch diameter handle. One kind, manufactured by the Le Roy Company, has a stork "cutout" in the center of the ring that shields the nipple. Le Roy's pacifiers are sold in plastic bags attached to a cardboard display with the words "Minirey Chupon, Garza Irrompible Con Miel Y Tapa Protectora" and picturing a baby in the upper right-hand corner of the display; a colorless plastic cap covers the honey-filled nipple. The Department has found other kinds of honey-filled pacifiers being sold without labeling.

The pacifiers are typically sold to the public in markets which cater to the Hispanic community and sold to merchants from the rear of vehicles. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has announced that Le Roy's pacifiers are being recalled from the San Francisco area because of their choking hazard. Stuart Richardson, Chief of the Department's Food and Drug Branch said "The Branch is working with local health agencies to locate these pacifiers in other parts of the State and to educate the community regarding the danger of these pacifiers."

While the Department is not aware of any reports of illness or injury from use of the pacifiers, consumers should take honey-filled pacifiers away from infants and young children immediately and either destroy them or return them to the place of purchase.

Consumers who believe infants are suffering from infant botulism should contact their physicians immediately. Consumers who observe honey-filled pacifiers being sold are encouraged to contact the Department's nearest Food and Drug Branch office.

The Department and CPSC learned of the problem after the U.S. Customs Service received an anonymous phone call reporting the sale in San Francisco of Le Roy's honey-filled pacifiers.

HONEY AND PACIFIER DANAGERS/info bulletins  
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