

# Beware the Lurkers, Luster Dust

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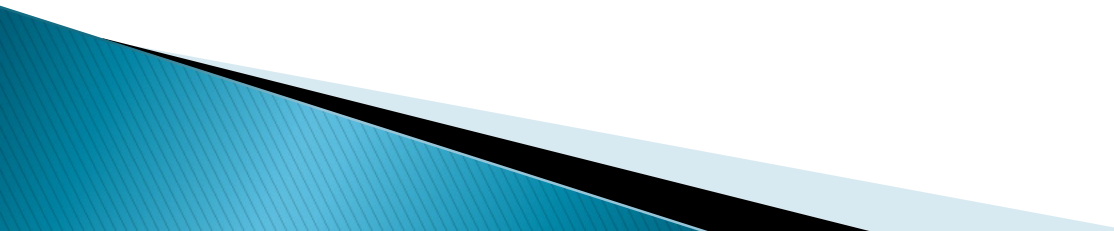


# Do You Like Heavy Metal?

.... We're not talking about music here...



# Lurkers

- ▶ Lurkers might be something we could overlook.
  - ▶ The more time it takes to find the cause, the more people who could become ill.
  - ▶ If we miss opportunities to detect the problem, the problem might escape detection to blind side us again.
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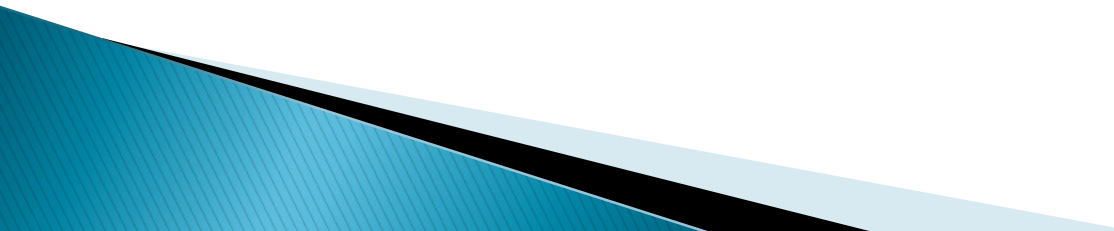
# Lurkers

- ▶ Although there will always be challenges with the usual suspects...

Salmonella

Listeria

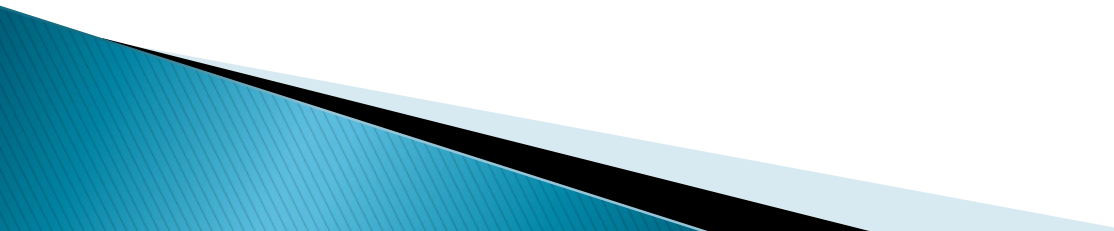
E. coli

- ▶ Lurkers can be unexpected causes, or novel causes of illness. Knowing what to look for can help.
  - ▶ Sharing information can help us.
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# National RRT Conference Call

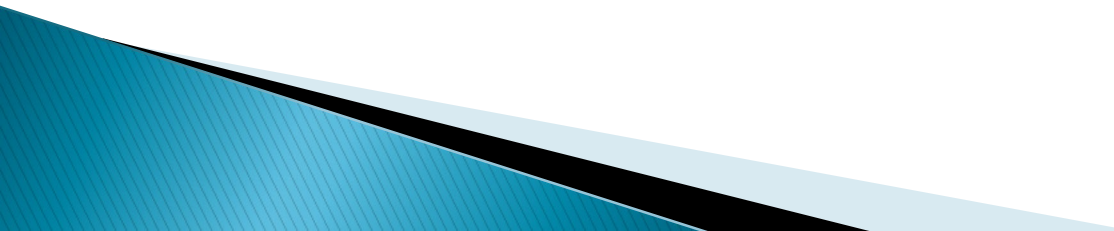


# Monthly Conference Call

- ▶ At some point every state shares information about their accomplishments lessons learned, etc. on the National Rapid Response Team Call.
  - ▶ Rhode Island had a really interesting food contamination event... they discovered a lurker!
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# Investigation

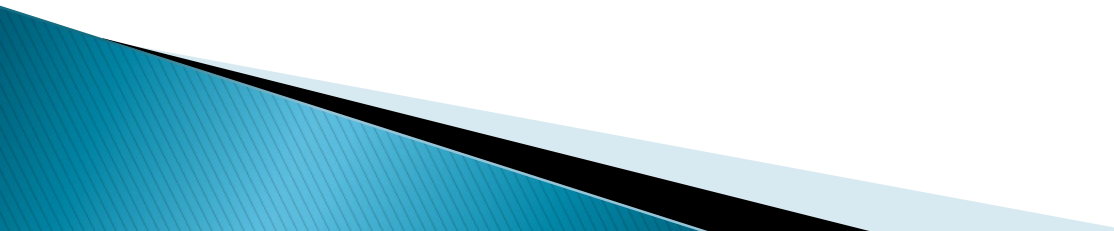
- ▶ Rhode Island looked into a case where six children became ill at a birthday party.
  - ▶ The children had vomiting and diarrhea, a few within minutes of eating the birthday cake.
  - ▶ The cake was the one thing the ill children had in common.
  - ▶ Onset, 30 minutes to less than 10 hours.
  - ▶ No well individuals consumed the frosting.
- 



This is a photo of the actual cake. People described it as “metallic,” and “glittery.”



# All That Glitters...

- ▶ The cake was baked, then frozen.
  - ▶ The cake was covered with butter cream icing and refrigerated.
  - ▶ Then “luster dust” was painted into the frosting mixed with food grade butter.
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# Luster Dust

- ▶ This “Rose Gold Dust” is the “luster dust” added to the cake icing.
- ▶ “Luster Dust” is a broad term an ingredient that can add sparkle, color or a metallic appearance to icing, cookies, candy, etc.
- ▶ It is also referred to as “petal dust, pearl dust, sparkle dust, disco dust, and highlighter dust.”

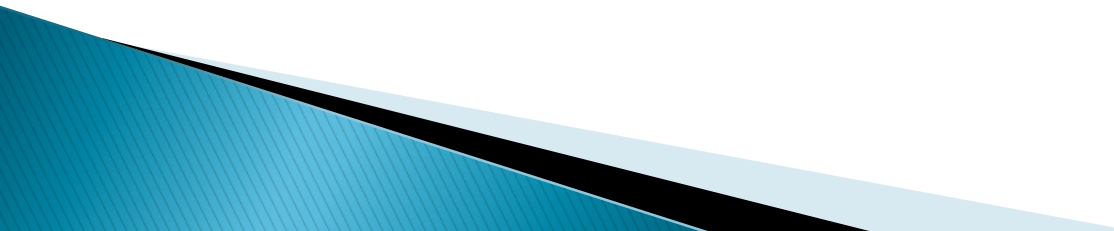


# A Piece of Cake

- ▶ Rhode Island tested a slice of the cake along with the Rose Gold Luster Dust.
- ▶ They found 22.1 milligrams of copper per gram in the Rose Gold frosting.
- ▶ They found 900 milligrams of copper on the slice of cake!



# Rhode Island Findings

- ▶ The toxicology specialist found the copper levels were sufficient to cause the symptoms which were consistent with heavy metal poisoning.
  - ▶ Rhode Island sampled 28 other luster dusts and found aluminum, barium, chromium, copper, iron, lead, manganese, nickel and zinc!
  - ▶ They found one-third of the bakeries in the state were using inedible luster dust on edible parts of food!
  - ▶ Rhode Island issued guidance to bakeries.
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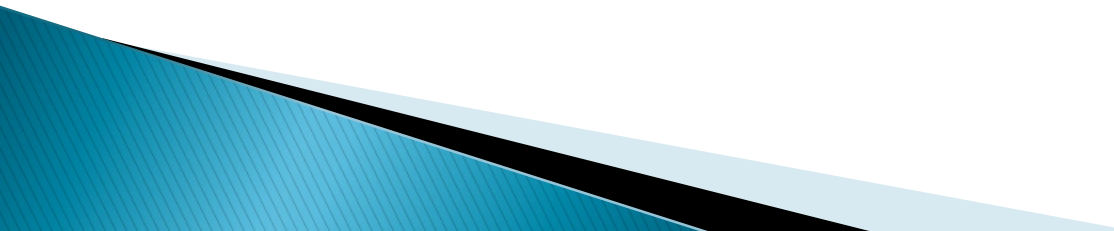
# Alerted to Luster Dust

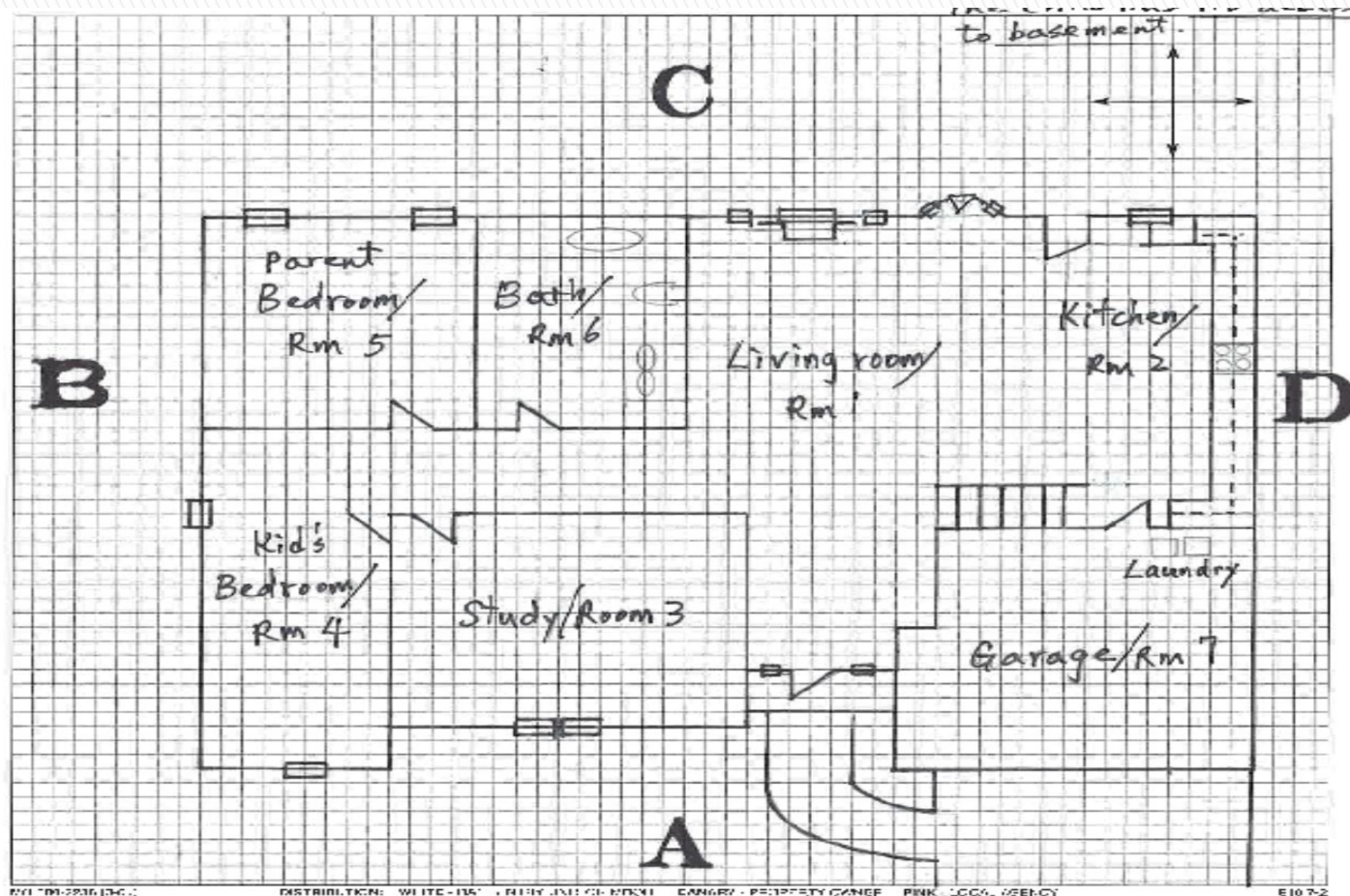
- ▶ Rhode Island shared information with us which was then emailed to:
- ▶ Missouri Rapid Response Team (MRRT) Members
- ▶ MRRT Steering Committee Members





# A Tough Case in Missouri

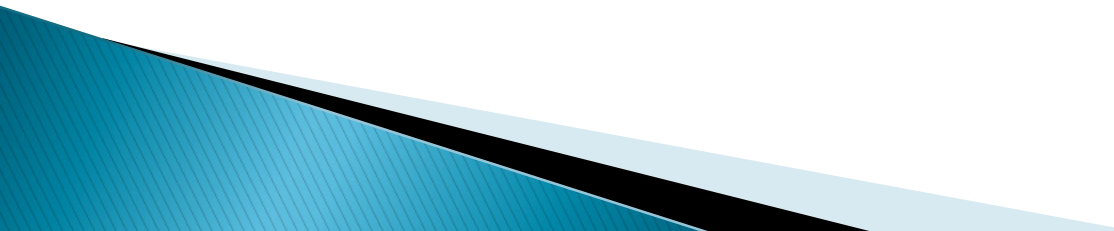
- ▶ We received notification of a child with elevated blood lead levels.
  - ▶ Finding the cause was difficult.
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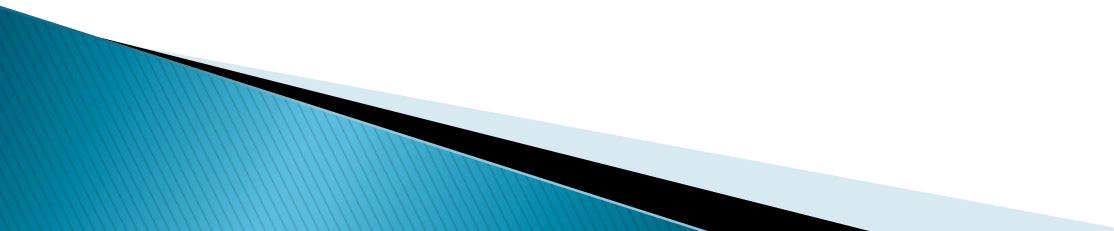
## Inspector's Drawing of the Child's Home

The inspector looked everywhere to try and find the reason for elevated lead levels. But this was a new home.

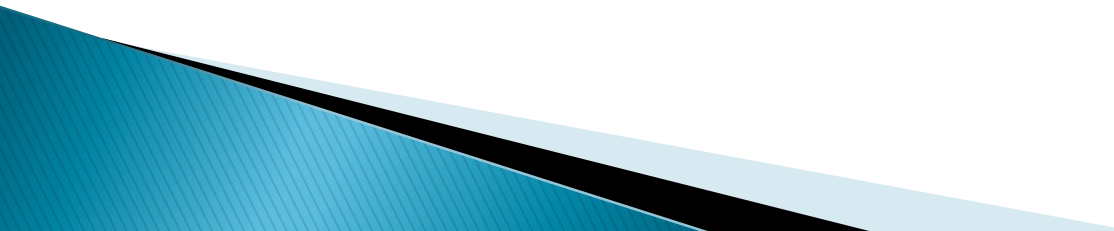
# Looking Everywhere

- ▶ There's no remodeling.
  - ▶ It's a new home, built long after lead was removed from paints and other potential sources.
  - ▶ The inspector tested soils.
  - ▶ Tested dust.
  - ▶ Walls, ceilings were tested.
  - ▶ Water was tested.
  - ▶ Nothing.
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# Searching for the Source

- ▶ The inspector also tested keys.
  - ▶ Toys.
  - ▶ Even books!
  - ▶ Nothing turned up.
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# Nothing Tested Except...

- ▶ The mother was conscientious. She couldn't believe that her child had elevated blood lead.
  - ▶ So, the mother began taking things out of cupboards, drawers, etc.
  - ▶ Only one thing had a hit.
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# Luster Dust By Any Other Name

- ▶ It was this Primrose Petal Dust that tested high for lead.
- ▶ The inspector detected it on site using an X-ray fluorescence analyzer.
- ▶ The same luster dust was used on a birthday cake eaten by the child with elevated lead.





The mother was a talented baker who took photos of the cake. The yellow flower petals contained the lead laden Primrose Petal Dust.



The child with elevated lead loved eating the flower petals on the cake.





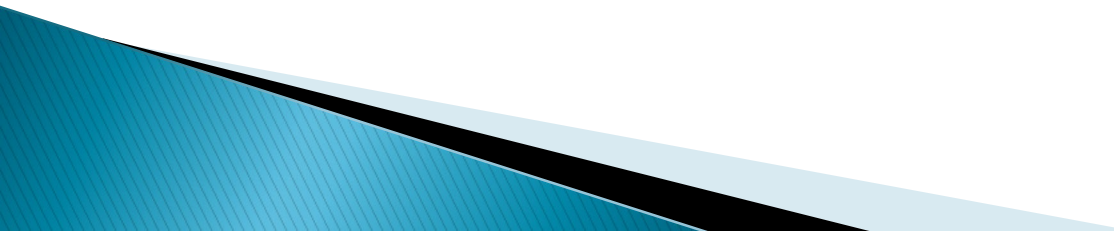
Primrose petal dust was also used for the yellow accents on the flowers for these cupcakes served at the party.



We tested the product detected by the lead inspector. It was 290,000 parts per million lead. It was literally 29% lead!



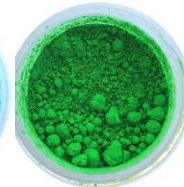
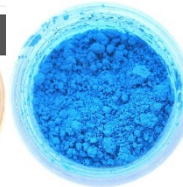
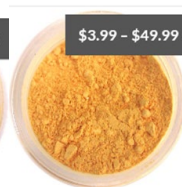
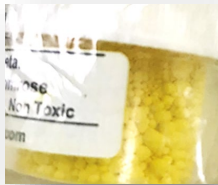
# We Still Wanted to Investigate Further

- ▶ We tested the open container, but it was still an open container.
  - ▶ We ordered Primrose Petal Dust and nine other luster dust products for testing.
  - ▶ We recorded information from the company's website.
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# Lead analysis results of selected Sunflower Sugar Art products

## by the MO State Public Health Laboratory

(Petal Dust category weight 0.08 oz)



Product name	Primrose	Sunflower	Buttercup	Ice Blue	Emerald	Daffodil	African Violet	Wild Salmon	Christmas Red	Tangerine
Lead (ppm)	2.5 x 10 <sup>5</sup>	200	150	110	92	87	83	<80	<80	<80

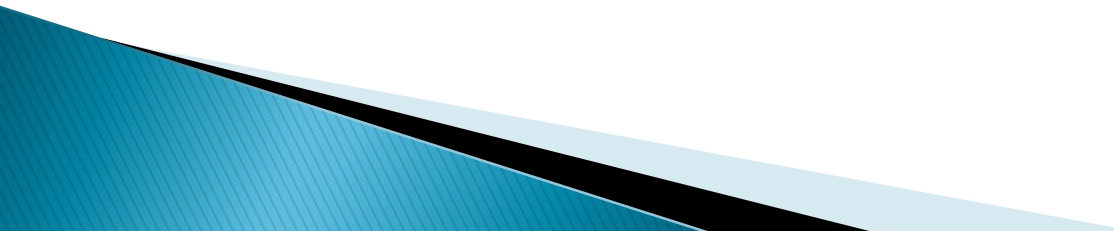


The new, unopened sample we purchased tested at 250,000 parts per million lead. So the product was literally 25% lead!

- ▶ The luster dust company is based in Florida.
- ▶ We contacted partners at the Florida Department of Agriculture.
- ▶ And FDA.

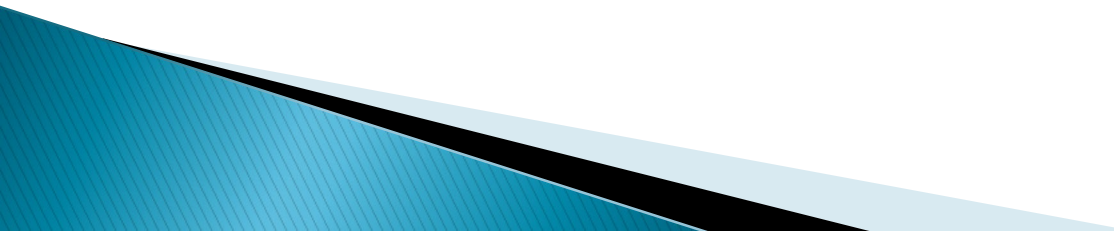


# Deep Concern

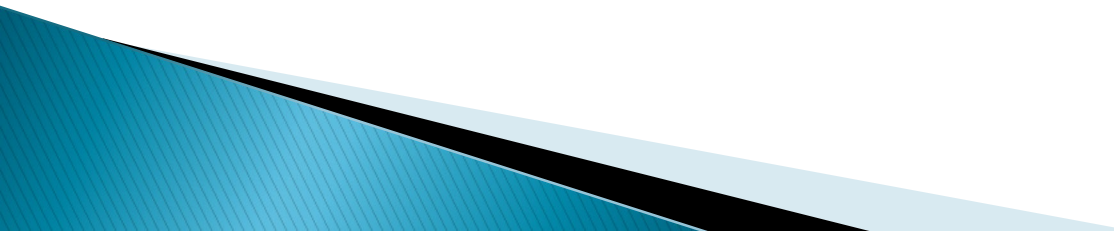
- ▶ FDA recommends that lead levels in candy products that may be consumed by small children not exceed 0.1 parts per million.
  - ▶ Our samples were way above that level.
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# We Issued an Advisory

- ▶ After consulting with the Florida Department of Agriculture, FDA and discussing our position with the luster dust producer we issued an advisory.
  - ▶ We warned consumers to discard any Primrose Petal Dust immediately.
  - ▶ We were also concerned that if parents were aware their children had consumed this product, they should consult with their physician about testing blood lead levels.
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# The Advisory

- ▶ We also urged consumers to carefully check the label of any decorative product.
  - ▶ The label needs to say that it is “edible.”
  - ▶ If the label says its “non-toxic” or “for decorative purposes only” it should not be used directly on foods.
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# A Big Part of The Problem




The "Non-Toxic" label tells you what you want to know, not what you need to know.

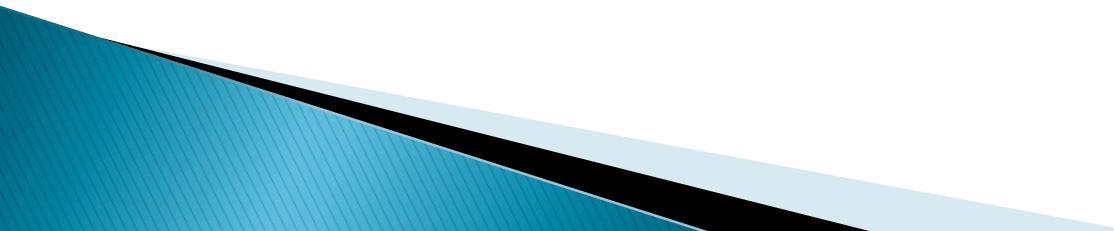


The label from the copper cake is a little more specific, but is there anything that says this product contains heavy metals?

# The Label Isn't the Only Problem, The Question Is... Is It Regulated?

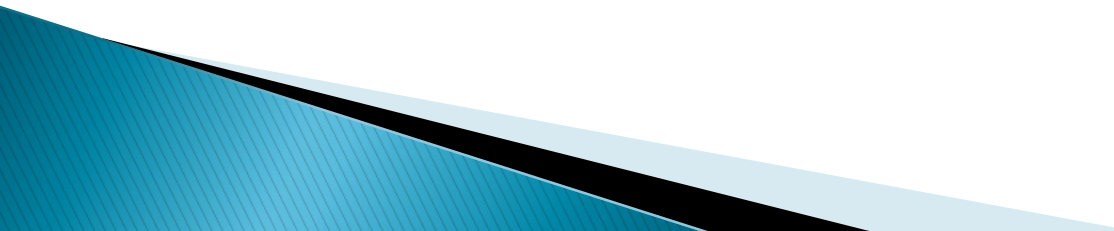
- ▶ The labels say “non-toxic,” “non-edible.”
  - ▶ In our case the company said the product was only for “artistic purposes,” “photographs.”
  - ▶ Luster dust is not considered a food product, it's considered a craft product.
  - ▶ After all, you and the kids will always remove it before you eat it.... Right?
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# Stay Alert

- ▶ What's important now is that you know this product has the potential to make people sick, possibly even harm children with lead content.
  - ▶ Now you have something in your set of suspects, so you have the chance to get the product before someone throws away the last piece of cake, or that old luster dust.
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# You Can Still Make an Impact

- ▶ We issued an advisory to warn people about the product.
  - ▶ The company literally withdrew the product from their website the next morning.
  - ▶ Rhode Island had the power to recall the product.
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# Lead is a Real Lurker

- ▶ Lead doesn't have symptoms.
- ▶ Consider luster dust when there is difficulty determining why a child had elevated blood lead levels.
- ▶ If people eat or drink the product, we can still make a difference!