

# Update: New Jersey Investigation of Artificial Turf and Human Health Concerns

June 2008

## *What is the status of the NJDHSS investigation of lead in artificial turf?*

In March 2008 the NJDHSS tested 12 artificial turf fields and two artificial turf consumer products for the presence of lead, after finding high concentrations of lead in artificial turf fibers at a field in Newark, NJ. In April 2008 the NJDHSS reported its findings that some artificial turf products (specifically, artificial turf fibers made of nylon) had lead at levels that were much higher than would be allowed in soil. In addition, on at least one older, worn field, a high level of lead was also found in dust that formed from the breakdown of the turf fibers. NJDHSS forwarded these findings to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

We know that lead from paint, soil, food, water, and some consumer products can get into a person's blood if he or she swallows the item, but we were uncertain if lead from artificial turf fibers and dust behaves the same way. The NJDHSS began testing the fibers and dust from the high lead fields in a way that mimicked the human digestion system to learn if digestion could dissolve the lead out of the artificial turf material. The NJDHSS received the results of those tests in late May, and has since completed its interpretation of those findings.

## *What did the NJDHSS find?*

We found that lead does dissolve from artificial turf fibers and turf dust under stomach acid conditions, and is available to be absorbed from the small intestine into the bloodstream. Moreover, the amount of lead that is accessible is similar to that seen in studies of lead in house dust and soil.

These findings confirm that there is a potential for lead exposures in individuals who play on artificial turf field with high lead levels.



Consumer and Environmental Health Services  
Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health  
PO Box 369  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0369  
(609) 584-5367

### ***What has NJDHSS is the NJDHSS planning to do next?***

Because this is a national issue, we have forwarded our findings to the CPSC for further investigation and appropriate follow-up. We have also notified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). We have requested that the CPSC, and assisting federal agencies, determine the appropriate measures required to protect public health at a national level.

The NJDHSS remains available to respond to questions and concerns from residents and others about these issues.

### ***Does the NJDHSS have any additional recommendations for NJ artificial field owners?***

The NJDHSS continues to recommend that artificial turf field managers and consumers who use residential turf products determine if their product has lead in the fibers. If fields are found to contain lead, the most conservative approach is to limit access to fields that contain lead, especially by children under age 7.

If fields are used, the individuals should perform aggressive hand and body washing after playing on the field, and clothing used on the field should be washed separately.