



For Immediate Release
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**MADIGAN AND ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ANNOUNCE EMBARGO ON LEAD-TAINTED CANDY IN ILLINOIS**

Chicago – Noting that Illinois ranks first in the nation in the number of children identified as lead-poisoned, Attorney General Lisa Madigan and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced a statewide embargo on four flavors of imported Mexican candy found to contain dangerous levels of lead.

IDPH late last week began working with local public health departments and store owners to begin removing the candy from store shelves across the state. The lead-tainted candies – Lucas Limon, Super Lucas, Lucas Acidito, and Lucas Limon con Chile – are produced by Lucas candies, a subsidiary of candymaker Mars, Inc. The powdered candies are packaged in a shaker container. Some children pour the powdered candy into their mouths in a practice called “waterfalling.”

Following the August 2004 discovery and embargo by the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) of candy from Mexico containing unacceptably high levels of lead, investigators from Madigan’s office surveyed suburban Cook County and Lake County where they also found the potentially dangerous candy.

“The State of Illinois will not tolerate shelves that are stocked with lead-laced candy available for sale to children,” Madigan said. “I am pleased to work with IDPH to take every step possible to ensure these dangerous products no longer make their way into small hands as treats or snacks. Illinois has more identified lead-poisoned children than any other state. We will keep working to lower that statistic.”

“It is imperative that these candy products are removed from the market to safeguard our children from the harmful effects of lead poisoning,” said Dr. Eric E. Whitaker, IDPH director.

“Despite assurances made earlier this year by the manufacturer that the candy would be taken off the shelves, local health department inspectors acting on our embargo order are finding it still available across the state. We applaud the Attorney General for her commitment to this effort and stand ready to assist in any way we can,” Whitaker added.

Madigan’s office also has opened an investigation into the sale of the lead-containing candies in Illinois and intends to discuss with candy maker Mars, Inc., how the candies are manufactured and how to prevent the re-introduction of any potentially dangerous candies in the Illinois marketplace.

Testing has shown these candies to contain as much as twice the amount of lead dictated by the federal guideline for lead in candy. Madigan and IDPH said that because these candies are sold primarily in Latino communities, those communities have been disproportionately affected and should be on alert to prevent children from consuming these products.

Lead is a heavy metal that can poison children even in small amounts. Children who are exposed to lead may suffer life-long learning problems and a lower IQ. Children are exposed to lead primarily from lead-based paint in older homes, but exposure to tainted food, water or other items can be a significant source of lead exposure for some children.

Consumers who have these products at home are advised to discard them immediately.

Pictured below are the Lucas Limon, Super Lucas and Lucas Acidito products. The Lucas Limon con Chile, also included in the embargo, is not pictured.

