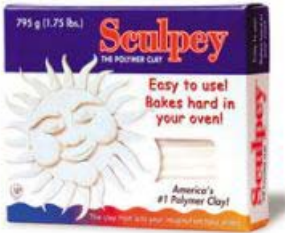


## Elementary, Middle, and High School Visual Art Harmful / Toxic Materials Sample Article



**This is a sample article. Please check to make sure that art materials are safe and non-toxic.**

### **Clay Chemicals May Be Harmful To Kids**

*Trade Association, CPSC Not Sure Chemicals Are That Bad*

POSTED: 9:09 a.m. EDT July 31, 2002

**MONTPELIER, Vt.** -- Popular brands of polymer modeling clays -- like Fimo and Sculpey -- contain toxic ingredients, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

A study conducted by the Vermont Public Interest Research Group found that many clays contain chemicals called phthalates, which make them flexible. Exposure to those chemicals can eventually lead to reproductive disorders and birth defects, the group said.

Children could be exposed to the chemicals by putting their hands in their mouths after touching the clay or by the release of toxic fumes when the clay is baked.

The clays contain warning labels, saying that the material is only for children 6 years or older and that it should not be overbaked.

However, a V-PIRG representative said that the warnings are insufficient and the group is calling for manufacturers to specifically outline the health risks.

"I think both the industry and the government have a responsibility to make sure they are safe before any more are sold," V-PIRG spokesman Paul Burns said.

A trade association recently labeled the clays nontoxic.

It said scientists evaluated every chemical in the clays and deemed them safe. The trade group called the V-PIRG report misleading and irresponsible.

Even the Consumer Product Safety Commission is skeptical.

Last year, the commission studied a phthalate in plastic teething toys and concluded that most children face "a minimal to non-existent risk of injury."

CPSC spokesman Ken Giles said the agency will take a look at the new data, but he said it's too soon to draw any conclusions. Until further tests are conclusive, Burns recommended that parents choose natural clays, rather than those that contain the potentially harmful chemicals.

The controversial polymer clays are available in arts and crafts shops as well as some toy stores.

#### **Additional Resources:**

 [www.vpirg.org](http://www.vpirg.org)

 [www.toysafety.net](http://www.toysafety.net)

Copyright 2002 by [WRAL.com](http://www.wral.com)

Website - <http://www.wral.com/health/1585860/detail.html>