



Response to Tamara Rubin from JustOne Lead Soldier

Dear Tamara,

I think that some of what you refer to in your blog entry is [my article](#) in [LEAD Action News \(May 2020\)](#). I am sorry that you feel this article criticises your work specifically. Actually, the only mention of your name was in relation to harassment of lead poisoning prevention activists, but you have not talked about this in your blog.

I would never believe that you do what you do to instil fear. I have also not used the term fear mongering and I do not think you deliberately exaggerate the risks from lead or campaigning on lead. What could happen are some unintended consequences. For instance, I will just share this comment from the 'Support For OCD (contaminants and toxins)' Facebook group - "I honestly picked up a lot of those fears in the Lead (Pb) Group."

The work you do is fantastic for individual families and about specific new products. I even wonder if you could franchise the service and have an army of lead safe mamas, and papas. The difficulty comes when you try to generalise your findings. Maybe fear is too strong a word, but there is a lot of doubt. Consider some of the questions asked your own articles and all the unanswered questions in your Facebook group.

Of course, knowing that an identifiable product contains lead informs customers, but what about similar items from other manufacturers or older versions? It must also matter whether lead comes out or not. I appreciate that you are limited by the tools available to you, but, if you could, why would you not want to do leach tests?

I find the statement "there is no safe level of lead exposure" difficult to apply in real life. Does it mean that there are only dangerous levels of lead? Lead is everywhere and in everything, but noticeable lead poisoning symptoms are not everywhere. We might say that if you can detect the lead with an XRF scanner then there is too much, but what must also matter is how much, how long and how often the lead is released and what compounds of lead are present. These questions are not answered by XRF analysis alone.

Giving families a gateway to learn about lead exposure through dishware may help in some cases, but many of us will then ask 'what else is toxic'. What are we to do? You cannot test everything in the world. Do we assume every untested item is dangerous,



throw it all away, and start again therefore producing huge amounts of waste? With so many readers you should take responsibility for answering these questions or elucidate the limitations of your work.

We are on the same side in this fight and should recognise that no one can know it all and no one can do it all. We perhaps comes from a different point of view on how to address the continued problem of lead toxicity. You deal with specific products and specific families where as I look at how government and business could make changes. When I read your work, I often ask how this could be applied nationally or internationally; without causing excess anxiety. You do a lot for a few, I do very little for many.

Let's be tolerant, sharing friends; not antagonistic enemies; and keep fighting lead.

Best wishes,

JustOne Lead Soldier

16th June 2020



Winner of the 2018 Volcano Art Prize: **Lead-safety Message: Just one lead soldier deployed undercover with an array of weaponry. Artist: Justone Lead-Soldier**

<https://volcanoartprize.com/portfolio-item/just-one-lead-soldier/>