



Press Release: Asbestos in Children's Products Sold in UK

May 21, 2018: A report released by a US analyst has confirmed the presence of tremolite asbestos in children's products sold at an outlet of Claire's Accessories in a London suburb. These products were purchased in April 2018 and shipped to the US for analysis.

The Asbestos Victims Support Groups Forum UK (the Forum) and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS) are seriously concerned about these findings. Graham Dring, the Chair of the Forum, was categorical:

“Having been aware of the asbestos contamination of products sold under the Claire's brand in the US, Canada and the Netherlands, the Forum was apprehensive that some of Claire's products on sale in the UK might also pose a health hazard. Working with our partners at IBAS we took steps to obtain suitable samples and analyses of the products. We are all extremely distressed to learn of the presence of tremolite asbestos in some of these items and will be communicating the full report to the British authorities.”

The analysis of the samples purchased on April 8, 2018 at the Claire's outlet was undertaken by Sean Fitzgerald, director of research and legal services at the Scientific Analytical Institute – a laboratory based in Greensboro, North Carolina. Mr. Fitzgerald is an expert in testing consumer products for asbestos and in 2017 was the first person to identify the asbestos present in a Claire's glitter make-up kit.¹ Subsequent testing he undertook on other Claire's products found asbestos contamination in 24 talc-based makeup items, including eye shadows, blushes and compact powders.

Explaining the results he obtained from the UK samples (full report: <http://ibasecretariat.org/sf-scient-analytic-inst-asb-rep-may-16-2018.pdf>), Mr. Fitzgerald said:

“I prepared eight individual samples from four of the kits sent to me, in which I confirmed the presence of tremolite asbestos in half of them. These subsamples were taken from three of the four kits. Here's the breakdown:

1. Claire's *Natural Eye Eyeshadow*: 3 tests, no asbestos detected.
2. Claire's *Blusher*: one test - **contains tremolite asbestos.**
3. Claire's “*Unicorn Powder*” eyeshadow: one test - **contains tremolite asbestos.**
4. Claire's *Eyeshadows*: *three tests* - 2 out of 3 **positive for tremolite asbestos.**”

Commenting on these findings, IBAS Coordinator Laurie Kazan-Allen said:

“There is no doubt in my mind that the use of these products could pose a serious health risk. I believe that the authorities must act immediately on the potential threat to the intended users of these products: children and young teenagers. I would like to see

product recalls, public health warnings and investigations of the composition of the talc-based products sold by Claire's not only in the UK but in other countries.”

Notes to Editors

1. Tremolite is an amphibole variety of asbestos. Although exposure to all types of asbestos fiber can cause a variety of cancers and debilitating diseases, amphiboles are widely regarded to be amongst the most toxic.²
2. Asbestos-contamination of products sold by Claire's Accessories, a US make-up and jewellery chain targeting children and young teenagers, has been reported in the US, Canada and the Netherlands.³
3. The company filed for bankruptcy in the US March 2018.⁴ Assurances have been given that Claire's UK operations will not be affected by the US developments.⁵
4. More information on the Forum can be found on its website:
<http://www.asbestosforum.org.uk>
5. The link for the IBAS website is: <http://ibasecretariat.org>
6. For further comment, Graham Dring can be contacted by email at: asbestos.mcr@gmail.com or by mobile at: 0788 787 1501. Sean Fitzgerald can be contacted by email at: sfitzgerald@sailab.com or by mobile at: 001 415 939 7752.

¹ *Asbestos-Hunter Finds Toxins in Claire's Makeup for Girls*. December 29, 2017.

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/asbestos-hunter-finds-toxins-in-claires-makeup-for-girls>

² *Asbestos Policies of Major International Agencies*. May, 2018.

http://ibasecretariat.org/lka_asb_polic_maj_int_agencies.php

³ News Release. European Government Agencies Order Claire's to Stop Selling asbestos-contaminated Make-up Products.

<https://uspig.org/news/usf/european-government-agencies-order-claire%E2%80%99s-stop-selling-asbestos-contaminated-makeup>

⁴ *Claire's files for bankruptcy*. March 19, 2018.

<http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/19/news/companies/claires-bankrupt/index.html>

⁵ *Claire's Accessories bankruptcy will not affect UK stores according to owner*. March 16, 2018.

<https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2018/03/claires-bankruptcy-will-not-affect-uk-stores/>