Is Your Pottery Safe to Use?

Keep your family safe.

Do not use pottery with lead for cooking, serving, or storing foods or beverages.

For more information about lead, call your local public health department.

The public health department can check you and your children for lead poisoning. They may also be able to test your pottery for lead.
Your pottery may contain lead.

Health authorities are advising people not to prepare food in pottery from Mexico or Latin America because this pottery may have high levels of lead. This pottery may be red, brown, tan, and shiny and is often used to cook beans or other foods. Other imported pottery such as pitchers and mugs may also have large amounts of lead.

Lead from pottery can cause lead poisoning.

Lead from pottery can enter the food that is in the pottery. Lead will not change the look or taste of the food or drink. If you or your children eat food that contains lead, lead will enter the body and can cause lead poisoning.

Lead poisoning is especially dangerous for pregnant women and children.

Children with lead poisoning may have difficulty learning. They may also have behavior problems and can become very sick.

Make sure your pottery is safe.

Follow these guidelines

Safe:

- Pottery made today in the United States must meet safety guidelines for lead and should be safe to use for food.
- Pottery is safe to use if it has a label such as: “Safe for food use” “Seguro para usar con alimentos”

Unsafe:

- Pottery made in other countries may not be safe to use for food.
- Old or antique pottery may be unsafe to use for food.
- Pottery is unsafe to use if it has a label such as: “Not for food use” “No usar con los alimentos” “Plate may poison food” “Objeto puede contaminar los alimentos” “For decorative purposes only” “Solamente para decorar”

Look carefully — this label may be erased or painted over.
- Pottery is unsafe to use if it has a gray powder on the glaze after the pottery has been washed.