



Protect Your Child from Lead Poisoning

What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning can cause serious harm to your child, like permanent behavior problems or permanent brain damage. If you are pregnant when exposed to lead, your unborn baby could be hurt. Lead paint is common in homes built before 1978. Lead can also be found in old or imported toys, jewelry, some home remedies, imported candy, dirt, in old water pipes, and at some job-sites. For a complete list and explanations, go to the CDC website:

www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm.

Children under 6 years old are at the greatest risk. Many children show no symptoms of poisoning. In others, the symptoms might look like the flu or fatigue (tiredness, sleeplessness, stomachache, vomiting).

You can keep your child from getting poisoned or lower the lead levels if the child has already been poisoned. 4 things to remember are:

1. Reducing Exposure
2. Screening
3. Testing
4. Nutrition



Reducing Exposure

Lead is found in many places, like paint, plaster, dirt, dust, ink, batteries, old toys and tap water. Many children put paint chips in their mouths. They also put things that are covered with lead dust into their mouths. There are ways to make sure that your child is safer.

- **If you have chipped or flaking lead paint in your home**, have it fixed by a licensed lead paint contractor. Don't do it yourself or let untrained people do it. If you are renting, call your landlord immediately to have it fixed. See our fact sheet [Lead Paint and Tenants' Rights](#).
- **Wash your children's hand often**, especially after they play outside, and before eating.
- **Wash your children's toys often.**
- **Check toys and children's furniture for product recalls.** The Consumer Product Safety Commission website has lists of product recalls that have to do with lead content. www.cpsc.gov/en/Recalls/

- **Keep your home as clean and free from dust as possible.** The best way to clean up lead dust is to wet mop your floors, wipe your window ledges, and wash all surfaces. Use a combination of warm water and dishwasher soap that has tri-sodium phosphate (TSP) in it. Pour the used water down the toilet. Wear plastic gloves when you clean. Throw out the used rags, sponges and mop-heads in a heavy-duty plastic bag.
- **Keep children away from chipping paint and windowsills.** Also, keep furniture away from damaged paint and windows so the kids don't climb up on them.
- **Clean outside.** Hose off porches, sidewalks, driveways and the sides of buildings to remove paint chips and dust.
- **Take off shoes before coming in the house** or make sure they are wiped well on a doormat outside. This keeps dirt and dust with lead in it out of your home.
- **Change out of work clothes** and shower before you come home, if you work with lead at your job. Wash your work clothes separately from the rest of the family laundry. Lead is used in many workplaces such as radiator repair shops, battery manufacturing plants, and lead smelters.
- **Test painted areas for lead before you remodel or remove paint.** Never sand, burn or scrape paint unless you are sure it does not have lead. It can make lead dust that children inhale.
- **Cover lead areas inside.** You can use contact paper, paper sacks, tape, or plastic. Do not use newspaper with colored ink.
- **Cover bare dirt in your yard.** Dirt can have lead in it from car fumes or from paint on the outside of the house. Cover the dirt with grass, bushes, wood chips, or sand.
- **Throw away or recycle newspapers and comic books.** The ink may have lead in it.



Screening

The only way to find out if your child has a high lead level or lead poisoning is to have a blood test at the doctor's office. The test should take blood from the arm, not the fingertip.

- **All children between 6 months and 2 years old should be tested twice a year.**
- **All children between 2 and 6 years old should be tested once a year.** Have your child tested immediately if your home or day care has dusty windowsills and the paint is peeling.

- **Pregnant women should be tested during their pregnancies.** High lead levels in the mother hurt the unborn child.
- **A pinprick blood test is not enough.** They are not exact enough. Ask your doctor to take blood out of your child's arm, not fingertip.

Testing

- If you rent and have **chipped or flaking paint** in your home, ask your landlord to have it tested immediately. See our fact sheet, [Lead Paint and Tenants' Rights](#), for more information.
- If your plumbing was installed before 1985, it may have lead solder. If it was done before 1930, it may have lead pipes. **You may want to get your water tested, also.**
- Many businesses and agencies offer **low-cost lead tests**. They can test paint, water, dirt, and other substances for lead. Call the Department of Health at (651) 201-4620 to find out who can do these tests near you.

For more information about lead and preventing lead poisoning:

The Minnesota Department of Health:

Phone: 651-201-4620

E-mail them at: health.asbestos-lead@state.mn.us

Go online to:

www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/

The National Lead Information Center:

Phone: 1-800-424-LEAD

Go online to www.epa.gov/lead

HUD (Housing and Urban Development):

Go online to:

www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/leadinfo



Nutrition

- **Avoid high fat foods.** Fat makes it easier for the body to absorb lead.
- **Feed your child 3 meals each day, plus 2 snacks.** Lead absorbs more slowly on a full stomach.
- **Always use cold water for cooking and making formula.** Let the water run for 1 minute before using it. If possible, use bottled water.
- **Store food in glass or plastic, not cans.** Aluminum cans may have lead used to seal them. This can get into the food after the can is opened.

- **Do not use older, imported or handmade dishes.** Some paints used on older dishes, imported dishes, and pottery contain lead.
- **Do not use medicines that have lead in them,** like Azarcon, Greta, Pay-loo-ah, Ghasard, Bala Gobi, Kandu, Alkohl, or Kohl.
- **Feed your children food high in iron, calcium and vitamin C.** These things make it harder for lead to be absorbed by your child’s body. See the list below.

Iron Rich Foods:

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| • Lean, red meat | • Lima beans |
| • Chicken, pork, or venison | • Whole grain or enriched bread |
| • Canned tuna, sardines, or salmon | • Peas |
| • Iron fortified cereals (Cheerios or Total) | • Baked beans |
| • Raisins, prunes, or dried fruit | • Soybeans |
| • Spinach | • Iron-fortified baby formula |
| • Greens (mustard, turnip, or collard) | |

Vitamin C Rich Foods:

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| • Oranges | • Strawberries |
| • Orange Juice | • Broccoli |
| • Grapefruit | • Greens (mustard, turnip, or collard) |
| • Grapefruit Juice | • Potatoes |

Calcium Rich Foods

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| • Milk | • Corn tortillas |
| • Yogurt | • Black-eyed peas |
| • Cheese | • Garbanzo beans |
| • Cottage cheese | • Tofu or bean curd |
| • Ice cream, ice milk,
frozen yogurt | • Canned salmon |

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

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