



# 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](http://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. There are 4 things to remember:

1. Reduce Exposure
2. Screen
3. Test
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 right away to have it fixed. See our fact sheet [Lead Paint and Tenants' Rights](#).
- **Wash your children's hands 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/](http://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 / Blood Tests

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 9 and 15 months old should have at least one blood lead test.
- All children between 18 and 24 months old should have at least one blood lead test.
- All children between 25 months and 5 years old should have a blood lead test if they didn't have one by 24 months old. Or if they are at risk for being around lead.
- All children between 6 and 17 years old should have a blood lead test if they are at risk for being around lead.

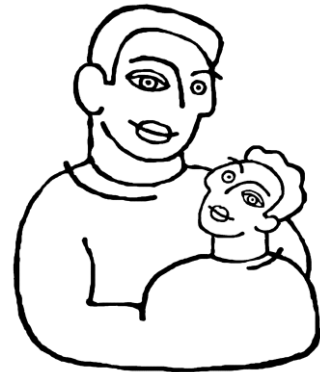
- Have your child tested right away if your home or day care has dusty windowsills and the paint is peeling.
- **Pregnant women should be tested during their pregnancies.** High lead levels in the mother hurts the unborn child.
- **A pinprick blood test is not enough.** They are not exact enough. Ask your doctor to take blood out of your child's arm, not fingertip.

## Testing Your Home

- 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.

## 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, Kandul, Alkoh, 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.



**Iron Rich Foods:**

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

**Vitamin C Rich Foods:**

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

**Calcium Rich Foods**

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

**For more information about lead and preventing lead poisoning****The Minnesota Department of Health:**

Phone: 651-201-4620 (asbestos and lead compliance unit)

E-mail them at: [health.asbestos-lead@state.mn.us](mailto:health.asbestos-lead@state.mn.us)

Go online to: [www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/](http://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](http://www.epa.gov/lead)

**HUD (Housing and Urban Development):**

Go online to: [www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/healthy\\_homes/leadinfo](http://www.hud.gov/program_offices/healthy_homes/leadinfo)

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

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