



LEAD POISONING

KNOW THE FACTS

Lead poisoning is caused by swallowing or breathing lead. Children under 6 years old are most at risk. If you are pregnant, lead can harm your baby.

- FACT** Lead can cause learning and behavior problems. Lead poisoning hurts the brain and nervous system. Some of the effects of lead poisoning may never go away. Lead in a child's body can:
- Damage the brain and nervous system
 - Slow down growth and development
 - Damage hearing and speech
 - Make it hard to pay attention and learn
 - Cause headaches
- FACT** Most children get lead poisoning from paint in homes built before 1978. When old paint cracks and peels, it makes dangerous dust. The dust is so small you cannot see it. Children get lead poisoning when they breathe or swallow the dust on their hands and toys.
- FACT** A lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning. Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick. Ask your doctor to test your child.
- FACT** Lead exposure can harm young children and babies even before they are born.
- FACT** Even young children who seem healthy can have high levels of lead in their bodies.
- FACT** You can get lead in your body by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil or pain chips containing lead.

Protect Your Family

1. Test your home for lead.
 - If you live in a home built before 1978, have your home inspected by a licensed lead inspector.
 - Contact your local health department for more information.

Sometimes lead comes from things other than paint in your home, such as:

 - Candy, toys, glazed pottery, and folk medicine made in other countries
 - Work like auto refinishing, construction, and plumbing
 - Soil and tap water
2. Keep children away from lead paint and dust.
 - Use wet paper towels to clean up lead dust. Be sure to clean around windows, play areas, and floors.
 - Wash hands and toys often, especially before eating and sleeping. Use soap and water.
 - Use contact paper or duct tape to cover chipping or peeling paint.
3. Renovate safely.

Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous dust.

- Keep children and pregnant women away from the work area.
- Make sure you and/or any workers are trained in lead-safe work practices.
- Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous dust.
- Removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family.

Where Lead is Found

In general, the older your home, the more likely it has lead-based paint.

- **Paint**

Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. The federal government banned lead-based paint from housing in 1978. Some states stopped its use even earlier. Lead can be found:

- In homes in the city, country, or suburbs.
- In apartments, single-family homes, and both private and public housing.
- Inside and outside of the house.

- **Soil**

In soil around a home. Soil can pick up lead from exterior paint, or other sources such as past use of leaded gas in cars, and children playing in yards can ingest or inhale lead dust.

- **Household dust**

Dust can pick up lead from deteriorating lead-based paint or from soil tracked into a home.

- **Drinking water**

Your home might have plumbing with lead or lead solder. Call your local health department or water supplier to find out about testing your water. You cannot see, smell or taste lead, and boiling your water will not get rid of lead. If you think your plumbing might have lead in it:

- Use only cold water for drinking and cooking.
- Run water for 15 to 30 seconds before drinking it, especially if you have not used your water for a few hours.

- **Job**

If you work with lead, you could bring it home on your hands or clothes. Shower and change clothes before coming home. Launder your work clothes separately from the rest of your family's clothes.

- **Old painted toys and furniture**

- **Food and liquids**

Food and liquids stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery or porcelain. Food can become contaminated because lead can leach in from these containers.

- **Lead smelters or other industries that release lead into the air.**

- **Hobbies**

Hobbies that use lead, such as making pottery or stained glass, or refinishing furniture.

- **Folk remedies**

Folk remedies that contain lead, such as "greta" and "azarcon" used to treat an upset stomach.