

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEAD POISONING

Lead poisons people.

- Children between 9 and 36 months of age are at increased risk of the effects of lead.



Lead poisoning can cause:

- Slow growth and development
- Speech and hearing delays
- Problems with learning and behavior
- Lead poisoning can affect and damage ALL body systems

Lead can be ingested (eaten) or inhaled (breathed in).

- The most common cause is dust from old lead-based paint. If floors have dust from old painted walls, or paint chips, a baby could suck on lead-dusted hands or toys or breathe in lead dust. Some toddlers eat paint chips, soil, or chew on lead-painted window sills and stair rails.
- Lead can also be found in soil and water, Asian and Hispanic folk medicines for stomach upset, and some cosmetics imported from the Middle East.

How is lead tested?

- At well-child visits at ages 1 and 2, your health care provider will collect a blood specimen to check for screening for elevated blood lead levels.
- A small amount of blood is taken from a finger prick or vein and tested for lead. Blood can be drawn at a doctor's office, hospital, clinic or lab. If you don't know where to bring your child for testing, call your local health department.

Feed your family foods that get ahead of lead.

- Foods high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C can help prevent lead poisoning.
- Feed children healthy snacks: A child with an empty stomach will absorb more lead.

How can I prevent lead poisoning?

- Keep children away from peeling paint and broken plaster.
- Wash their hands and toys often, to rinse off any lead dust or dirt.
- Use cold water - not hot - for infant formula or cooking. Let the cold water run for at least a minute before using to flush lead picked up from pipes.
- Store food from open cans in glass or plastic containers. Use lead-free dishes without chips or cracks.
- Avoid having children play in soil especially, around the foundations of older buildings and near roadways. Keep children away from remodeling and renovation sites.
- Don't bring lead home with you from work. People who work at construction, plumbing, painting, auto repair and certain other jobs can be exposed to lead. Wash work clothes separately.
- When windows are open in warm weather, wash the sills and window wells any time you see dust, but at least once a month.

Call your local health department to learn more and for information about professionals who handle lead-based paint problems.



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