

Lead Poisoning Prevention Tips

Could your child be exposed to lead?

Here are important facts to know about lead exposure and its potentially harmful effects.

- Lead is a toxic element, especially in young children. When absorbed into the body, it can result in damage to the brain and nervous system, learning and behavior problems, slow growth and development, and hearing and speech problems.

Lead poisoning is preventable!

Lead can be found inside and outside the home. The most common source of exposure is from lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978.

Lead can also be found in drinking water. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets and fixtures.

You can take simple steps to protect family members from lead poisoning, such as eating a healthy diet, regularly cleaning the home, washing children's hands and toys often, and wiping shoes before entering the home.

If you live in a home built before 1978, a certified inspector or risk assessor can be hired to check your home for lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards. Many communities have free resources to assist with home assessments and removal of lead hazards. Contact your local health department or community development corporation for information.

Children can become exposed to lead by:

- Putting their hands or other lead-contaminated objects in their mouths
- Inhaling or ingesting lead-contaminated dust
- Playing in lead-contaminated soil
- Eating imported candies or food made with lead-containing imported spices

Some children are at greater risk for lead exposure than others, including those who are:

- From low-income families
- Living with adults whose jobs or hobbies involve working with lead
- Members of racial-ethnic minority groups
- Recent immigrants
- Living in older, poorly maintained rentals



By the numbers

About 3.6 million American households have children under 6 years of age who live in homes with lead hazards. According to the CDC, over 500,000 American children between the ages of 1 and 5 have blood lead levels at or above the CDC blood lead reference value (the level at which CDC recommends public health actions begin).

Get your home tested

If your home was built before 1978, you can get it tested for lead-based paint by obtaining:

- A lead-based paint inspection that tells you if your home has lead-based paint and where it is located.
- A lead risk assessment that tells you if your home currently has any lead hazards from paint, dust or soil, and where they are located.
- Free resources available in some areas to assist in home repairs. Contact your local health department.

Get your child tested

Act early to get your child tested for lead. Consult your health care provider for advice on blood lead testing or your health department for more information.

Call EPA Region 7 toll-free at 800-223-0425
or visit epa.gov/lead
#LeadFreeKids