Finding Lead in Your Home
Introduction

This booklet provides information to help you find sources of lead that may be hazards for your family. It contains:

- Questions to help you find out if you are at risk
- Recommendations of what you can do to protect your child
- Descriptions or examples of where lead is found
- Resources for more information

Some sections of this booklet may not apply to you. Questions at the beginning of each section will help you decide if the section applies.

It is important to know that, in Vermont, most children are lead poisoned by eating lead dust. The most common source of lead dust is lead paint in houses built before 1978. In 1978, lead was banned in house paint.

Children can also get lead poisoning from sources other than lead paint. Water, soil, and many products may contain lead. Lead may also be brought home from a job or an adult may have a hobby or pastime that uses lead.

All children should have a blood lead test at ages 1 and 2 years.
Lead in Paint

Are You At Risk

Do you live in a house built before 1978?
- Yes
- No

If yes, assume your home has lead-based paint.

What You Can Do

- Check regularly for chipping, peeling, or disturbed paint.
- Block your child's access to chipping, peeling, or disturbed paint.
- If you rent, contact your landlord when you find chipping, peeling, and disturbed paint. Vermont law requires landlords to maintain paint in good condition.
- If you own, use lead-safe work practices to repair chipping, peeling, or disturbed paint.
- Use only a vacuum with a HEPA filter to clean up lead chips and dust. A vacuum without a HEPA filter blows lead dust back into the air.
- Use wet disposable towels to clean up lead chips and dust. Dry dusting or dry sweeping will spread the lead dust around.
- Use lead-safe work practices whenever you remodel or renovate your home.

Call Environmental Health, Lead Poisoning Prevention, for more information about lead paint hazards and safe work practices.

800-439-8550 or 802-865-7786
Where It Is Found

All painted surfaces should be checked for chipping, peeling and disturbed paint. Certain parts of the house need special attention.

• Windows
  Paint can scrape off windows as they are opened and closed. Flakes and dust fall onto the window sill and into the window well.

• Doors
  Lead dust and flakes can fall to the floor as doors are opened and closed. Beware that baby gates across doorways may scrape or chip paint, creating lead dust and chips.

• Baseboards
  Baseboards are bumped and chipped in the normal course of everyday life.

• Floors and Stairways
  Paint wears off floors and stairs as people walk. Lead in soil from outside can also be tracked in.

• Porches
  Vermont’s weather is hard on outdoor surfaces. Many porches have chipping, peeling paint on siding, railings, and floor.
Lead in Soil

Are You At Risk

Do you have bare soil around the foundation of a building (house/garage/shed) built before 1978?
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do you live near a busy street or roadway?
☐ Yes   ☐ No

What You Can Do

• Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that contains lead into the house.

• Keep children from playing in bare soil along side older buildings and near roadways.

• Provide a lead-free sandbox.

• Cover bare soil with 6 to 8 inches of mulch, gravel, or lead-free soil.

• Plant grass over bare soil.

• Avoid planting vegetable gardens along side older buildings, near roadways, or any area where lead may be in the soil.

• Be aware that lead stays in the top layer of soil for years. The source may be gone, for example, leaded gas, but the lead remains in the soil.
Where It Is Found

Lead in soil remains in the top layer of soil for years.

- Lead may be found in soil near buildings that were painted with lead-based paint.
- Lead from car exhaust when leaded gas was used may be found in soil along side roads.
- Burning anything painted with lead paint sends lead into the air that falls back onto soil.
- Lead arsenate was regularly used as a pesticide in apple orchards. Soil in orchards or where orchards used to be may contain lead.
- Scraping, dry sanding, water blasting, or pressure washing lead paint or using a heat gun can send lead into the air that falls back onto soil.
- Soil near industries that use lead in the manufacturing process may contain lead.
- Outdoor shooting ranges may have lead in the soil.
Lead on the Job

Are You At Risk

Do you work with lead on the job?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

Check the list on the next page for examples of jobs that may involve lead.

What You Can Do

• Be careful not to bring lead home from the job.
• Remove work clothes and work shoes at work.
• Shower and wash face and hair at work or immediately when you get home.
• Keep street clothes and work clothes in separate lockers at work.
• Wash work clothes separately from other clothes.
• Keep work clothes and work shoes in plastic bags when transporting or before washing.
• Keep lead dust from your job out of your car. Be sure lead dust does not get on baby’s car seat.
• Be aware that marine, auto, bicycle or other commercial paints may still contain lead.

Call Environmental Health, Lead Poisoning Prevention for more information about working with lead on the job and not bringing it home with you.

800-439-8550 or 802-865-7786
Where It Is Found

**Automobile**
- Auto body painting or repairing
- Auto and truck assembling or dismantling
- Battery manufacturing, recycling or repairing
- Radiator manufacturing or repairing

**Construction Trades**
- Abrasive blasting or abating lead paint
- Painting with or removing commercial paints
- Plumbing
- Renovating/remodeling buildings or metal structures
- Salvaging/wrecking/torch cutting structures
- Welding, riveting, or building metal structures

**Firearms**
- Bullet, explosive, or flare manufacturing
- Firearms manufacturing, repair, or shooting

**Metal Working**
- Cable/wire manufacturing, recycling, splicing, or repairing
- Metal casting, forging, grinding, polishing, or buffing
- Metal heat treating/quenching/annealing
- Metal mining, smelting or refining
- Plating, electroplating, soldering, brazing or tinning
- Scrap metal processing or recycling

**Other**
- Adhesive or sealant manufacturing
- Aircraft part manufacturing
- Computer manufacturing or repairing
- Ink, dye, or pigment use or manufacturing
- Linotype printing
- Electrical supply manufacturing
- Paint manufacturing
- Rubber or plastic manufacturing
- Shipbuilding, repairing, or salvaging
- Working with porcelain, pottery, ceramics, crystal, or glass
Lead in Water

Are You At Risk

Is your plumbing system old?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Do you have brass or chrome fixtures?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Have you tested your water for lead?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

What You Can Do

• Run water until it is cold to use for cooking, drinking, and making formula and ice cubes.

• Be aware that boiling water does not remove lead.

• Keep your children from drinking water from hoses. Vinyl in hoses may contain lead.

• Test your kitchen tap for lead.

Call the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory for information about testing your water.

800-660-9997 or 802- 863-7335
Where It Is Found

A home’s plumbing system may contain lead in several places.

- Old pipes and fittings sometimes contain lead.
- Solder used in plumbing may contain lead. The Vermont Plumbing Code banned the use of leaded solder in drinking water systems in 1989.
- Fixtures, especially those made of brass or chrome, may contain lead.
- Brass water meters may contain small amounts of lead.
- Hot water dissolves lead more easily than cold water. This is why you should run your water until cold for cooking, eating, and making formula.
Lead in Hobbies and Pastimes

Are You At Risk

Do you engage in any hobbies or pastimes that use lead?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Check the list on the next page for examples of hobbies and activities that may involve lead.

What You Can Do

• Do not allow children in the area where you do your hobby or pastime.
• Clean the area where you do your hobby using lead specific cleaning methods.
• Wash your hands thoroughly after using lead.
• Keep clothes used with your hobby separate from street clothes.
• Shower and wash face and hair immediately after using lead with your hobby or pastime.
• Wash clothes used with your hobby or pastime separately from other clothes.
• Be aware that marine, auto, bicycle or other commercial paints may still contain lead.
• Check “Lead on the Job,” page 6 for other recommendations that may apply.
Where It Is Found

**Arts and Crafts**
- Bronze casting
- Collecting or painting lead figurines
- Copper enameling
- Jewelry making
- Making or painting stained glass
- Making pottery or ceramic ware with lead glazes and paints
- Painting/printmaking/other fine arts (when lead white, flake white and chrome yellow pigments are involved)

**Building and Repairing**
- Painting/stripping or repairing cars, boats, or bicycles
- Painting parts of the house or furniture
- Restoring antiques
- Remodeling, repairing, and renovating homes
- Soldering
- Using salvaged building components

**Games and Sports**
- Hunting, target shooting, fishing with lead weights
- Making or repairing firearms
- Melting lead for fishing sinkers or bullets
- Playing with lead figurines
- Using pool cue chalk
- Working with bullets, shot, explosives, fireworks

**Other**
- Distilling liquor
- Maple sugaring using old equipment with lead
- Repairing computers
- Using lead solder with electronics
Lead in Consumer Products: Common

Are You At Risk

Does your child have metal or painted wood jewelry?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Does your child play with metal keys?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Does your child use products that have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

What You Can Do

• Keep children away from products with lead.

• Do not let children play with metal keys or other metal objects.

• Check regularly with the Consumer Product Safety Commission for recalls of products with lead.

For recall information: www.cpsc.gov
Where It Is Found

This page gives examples of common products that may contain lead.

**Children’s Products Made in Other Countries**
- Children’s jewelry
- Crayons
- Metal playground equipment
- Metal toys
- Painted toys

**Products OftenHandled by Children**
- Car and house keys
- Key chains
- Zipper pulls

**Other**
- Automotive, marine, and commercial (non-house) paints
- Aviation fuel
- Car batteries
- Computer parts
- Fishing sinkers
- Inks and dyes used in things such as fabrics and packaging
- Lead shot
- PVC plastic in vehicles
- Radiator and auto body solder
- Tattoo inks
- Wheel weights in automobiles
Lead in Consumer Products: Household

Are You At Risk

Do you have antique furniture?
- Yes  - No

Have you used salvaged building materials in your home?
- Yes  - No

Do you use pottery or ceramics made in other countries, especially Mexico and China?
- Yes  - No

Do you have vinyl miniblinds that did not come with a lead-free label?
- Yes  - No

Do you have candles with metal-cored wicks?
- Yes  - No

What You Can Do

- Be aware that antique furniture may have lead paint. Use safe work practices when refinishing.
- Use safe work practices when preparing salvaged building materials such as old doors and windows for reuse. Even stripped components may still have lead.
- Use only handmade dishes or pots for food or drinks that you know were made lead free.
- Do not store food in open cans, pottery or lead crystal.
- Be aware that vinyl miniblinds may contain lead.
- Do not burn candles with metal-cored wicks.
Where It Is Found

Many household products and furnishings may contain lead. This list gives examples.

**Furnishings**
- Enamel bath tubs and sinks
- Imported vinyl miniblinds
- Painted or varnished antique furniture
- Salvaged building materials including stripped, painted, or stained items

**Tableware and Pots**
- Lead crystal
- Lead-glazed pottery and ceramic ware, especially from Mexico and China
- Metal pots with lead solder (samovars)
- Pewter mugs or plates

**Home Decorations**
- Antique paper weights or door stops
- Antique toy soldiers and other models
- Candle wicks with metal cores, especially imports from China and Mexico

**Other**
- Electrical cords
- Hoses
Lead in Consumer Products: Imported

Are You At Risk

Does your child eat candy from Mexico?  
☑ Yes  ☐ No

Do you eat food that comes in imported cans?  
☑ Yes  ☐ No

Do you use home remedies or cosmetics imported from other countries?  
☑ Yes  ☐ No

What You Can Do

• Be aware that candy from Mexico may contain lead.
• Be aware that lead solder may still be used in cans from some countries.
• Avoid use of imported home remedies or cosmetics.
Where It Is Found

Products imported from some countries may contain lead. This list gives examples.

**Home Remedies**
Azarcon (Mexico/Central America) also called Rueda, Corol, Alarcon, Maria Luisa, Ligo
Ba-Baw-San (China)
Bala Goli (Asian Indian/Middle East)
Bint Al Zahab (Iran)
Bint Dahab (Saudi Arabia)
Bokhoor (Kuwait)
Ghasard (Asian Indian/Middle East)
Greta (Mexico)
Jin Bu Huan (China)
Kandu (Asian Indian/Middle East)
Pay-loo-ah (Vietnam)
Po Ying Tan (China)
Santrinj (Saudi Arabia)
Tibetan herbal vitamin
Traditional Saudi medicine

**Imported Cosmetics**
Kohl (Middle East, India, Pakistan, some parts of Africa)
also called Alkohl or Hashmi Surma
Litargirio (Dominican Republic)
Pakistani eye cosmetics
Surma (India)

**Other**
Candy from Mexico
Food cans with lead soldered seams
Spices from India
Resources

**Vermont Department of Health**
Environmental Health, Lead Poisoning Prevention
108 Cherry Street, PO Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402

800-439-8550
802-865-7786
http://healthvermont.gov

**Vermont Housing and Conservation Board**
Lead Hazard Reduction Program
58 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

800-290-0527
802-828-5064
http://www.leadSAFEvermont.org