

# Lead in Vintage, Antique and Salvaged Items

## February 2026

You and your family can be exposed to lead if you own older household items or consumer goods. Lead was often used in paint, furniture, jewelry, glassware, ceramics, tools, toys, and more. Salvaged building materials like doors, windows, sinks, bathtubs and fixtures also create lead risks, even in newer homes.

If you are unsure if a vintage, antique or salvaged item contains lead, assume it does and take steps to prevent lead exposure. Young children and pregnant people are especially at risk, since lead poisoning affects children's growth, behavior and ability to learn. Whether or not you keep older items in your home, it's important to test your child's blood lead levels at ages 1 and 2.

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [AHS.HealthyHomes@vermont.gov](mailto:AHS.HealthyHomes@vermont.gov).

### Live Safely With Older Items



- Test water from **salvaged faucets or fixtures** before you use it for drinking or cooking. Learn how at [HealthVermont.gov/water/testing](https://HealthVermont.gov/water/testing).
- Do not eat, drink or store food or liquids in **glassware, dishes, imported ceramics or glazed pottery** unless you are sure there is no lead.
- Clean **display items like trinkets, jewelry, toys or tools** lightly with a damp cloth, or use a vacuum with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter. Keep these items out of children's reach.
- You can have items **tested for lead** at a certified lab.

### Refinishing Older Furniture



### Salvaged Building Materials

About 60% of Vermont's homes were built before 1978, the year lead was banned from house paint. Over time, lead from lead-based paint seeps into the home's wood. Paint stripping can push lead further into the wood. If wood is disturbed in any way, it can create lead dust.

Salvaged building materials like windows, window frames and sashes, doors and banisters can be lead hazards.

- Wrap salvaged items in plastic when moving them to reduce the spread of lead paint chips and dust.
- Refinish or seal salvaged building materials before putting them in your home. Follow the practices in the next section when working with salvaged items.

## Safe DIY practices



- Do work outside of the house, like in a garage. Enclose your work area with plastic sheeting. Keep children and pregnant people out of your work area, and do not eat or drink in that area.
- Wear safety glasses and protective clothing that you can throw away or wash separately.
- Wear a mask with a HEPA filter while working.
- Work wet by spraying water on surfaces you are sanding or scraping. Do not use a power sander.
- Clean often by collecting paint chips and using a damp rag to pick up dust.
- Take off your shoes or shoe covers any time you leave your work area.
- Wash your hands and face after leaving the work area and before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to clean up, then wipe surfaces with a damp cloth or mop. Throw away all used rags, mop heads, disposable clothing and plastic sheeting. Flush any dirty water down the toilet.

Learn more about lead-safe DIY practices at  
[HealthVermont.gov/BeLeadSafe](http://HealthVermont.gov/BeLeadSafe).