

Lead

There is **no** safe level of lead in the body. Lead can harm anyone, but young children and pregnant women are at special risk. The harm done by lead may never go away. Lead in the body can:

- Hurt the brain, kidneys and nervous system
- Slow down growth and development
- Make it hard to learn
- Damage hearing and speech
- Cause behavior problems

Young children can be exposed to lead by eating, chewing, or sucking on lead-painted objects. Metal objects may also contain lead. Over time, lead paint on surfaces crumbles into invisible dust that contaminates homes and soil. This dust or soil clings to toys, fingers and objects that children put in their mouths.

Lead Paint

Dust from lead paint is the major source of lead poisoning in children. In 1978, lead was banned from house paint. Most homes built before that time are likely to contain lead. Children can be exposed to lead during renovation projects or whenever lead paint is improperly sanded, scraped or burned. They can breathe in the lead dust as well as get the dust in their mouths.

Lead in the Environment

Soil may contain lead from lead paint that flakes off the outside of the buildings and from car exhaust from the days of leaded gasoline. Keep children from playing in bare soil. Beware of contaminated soil along the side of older homes and near roadways that may be tracked into the house.

Drinking water may contain lead from lead pipes, plumbing fixtures or solder. Run water until it is cold to use for cooking, drinking and making baby formula.

Other Sources of Lead

Children can get lead poisoning from sources other than lead paint. Many products may contain lead.

Lead in workplaces or parent's clothes

- Construction and renovation work
- Auto repair and work with batteries
- Plumbing
- Places where people do welding or soldering

Lead in handmade pots and dishes

- Glazed pottery, like bean pots
- Metal pots with lead solder (samovars)

Lead in Products

- Toy jewelry made in other countries
- Toys made in other countries
- Children's jewelry
- Imported candy, especially from Mexico
- Imported cans of food
- Metal keys
- Imported make-up and home remedies

Lead in some crafts and sports

- Stained glass
- Bullets
- Fishing sinkers
- Artist's paints

Check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission regularly for recalled products that are lead hazards. www.cpsc.gov



Prevention

Lead poisoning is a serious but preventable health problem. Keep your children away from sources of lead. If you are a tenant in a house built before 1978, your landlord must look for chipping and peeling paint and fix it in a safe way. You can also help prevent lead poisoning by maintaining your house in good condition, cleaning in a lead-safe way, and eating healthy foods.

Maintain



- Check for chipping, peeling, cracked, or disturbed paint.
- Block children's access to chipping, peeling, cracked, or disturbed paint until it is fixed
- Install window well inserts to provide a smooth cleaning surface.
- Use lead-safe work practices such as wet sanding and wet scraping.
- Do not use a belt sander or heat gun. Do not dry scrape or dry sand.

Clean



- Use only a vacuum with a HEPA filter, and vacuum slowly.
- Wet mop floors instead of sweeping.
- Use disposable towels to wet clean window sills and other surfaces.
- Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that contains lead into the house.
- Wash children's toys often to remove invisible lead dust.

Eat Healthy



- Serve children fruits, vegetables and dairy products, as well as iron-rich foods.
- Plant vegetable and other food gardens in lead-free soil.
- Run water until cold for cooking, drinking, and making formula.
- Wash children's hands often, especially before meals and naps.
- Serve snacks and meals to children at the table or in their highchairs.

Testing Your Child for Lead

The way to find out if your child has been exposed to lead is a blood lead test. Your child should have a blood lead test at age 1 and again at age 2.

Find Out More Information

Call the Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (802) 863-7220 or toll-free in Vermont at (800) 439-8550 for more information about sources of lead and lead poisoning, or visit healthvermont.gov.