
Finding Lead in Your Home



Introduction

This booklet provides information to help you find lead sources that could be dangerous for your family.

- Questions to help identify possible **lead exposure risks**
- 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 do activities that use lead.

All children should have a [blood lead test](#) at age 1 and again at age 2.

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Lead in Paint

Are You At Risk?

Do you live in a house built before 1978?

If so, 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 or peeling paint. Don't allow children to eat food that has fallen where there is lead dust. If food lands on the floor or ground, throw it away.
- If you rent your home, contact your landlord if you find chipping or peeling paint. [Vermont law](#) requires landlords to maintain paint in good condition and perform yearly inspections and cleaning.
- If you own your home, use [lead-safe work practices](#) to repair chipping or peeling paint.
- Use only a vacuum with a HEPA filter to clean up lead paint 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 and [lead safe cleaning to maintain your home](#).

Where It Is Found

All painted surfaces should be checked for chipping or peeling 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 windowsill and into the window well.

Doors

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

Baseboards

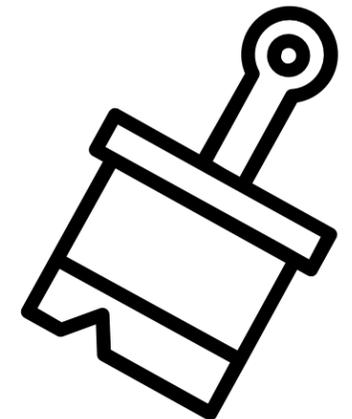
Baseboards are bumped and chipped during everyday life.

Floors and Stairways

Paint wears off floors and stairs as people walk. Lead in soil from outside can also be tracked into the home.

Porches

Vermont's weather is hard on outdoor surfaces. Many porches have chipping or peeling paint on siding, railings and floors.



Lead in Soil

Are You At Risk?

Do you have bare soil around the foundation of a building (house/garage/shed) built before 1978?

Do you live near a busy road or street?

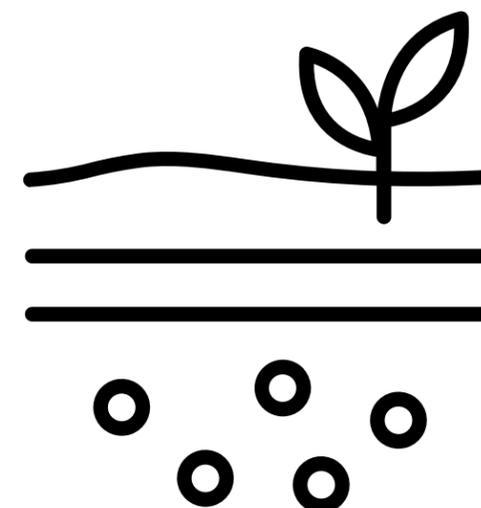
If so, there may be lead in the soil outside of your home.

What You Can Do

- Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that contains lead into your home.
- Keep children from playing in bare soil alongside older buildings and near roadways.
- Offer an alternative lead-free place for children to play in, like a 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 near older buildings, roads, 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 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 near 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.
- Unsafe work practices that can send lead into the air that falls back onto soil, such as scraping, dry sanding, water blasting, or using a pressure washer or heat gun on lead paint.
- Soil near industries that use lead in the manufacturing process may contain lead.
- Shooting ranges may have lead in the soil.



Lead on the Job

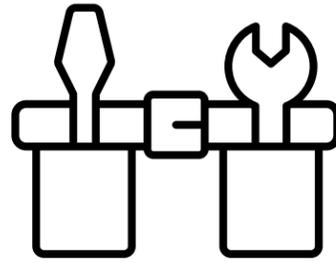
Are You At Risk?

Do you work with lead on the job?

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



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 from before 1950?

Do you have brass or chrome fixtures?

If so, there may be lead in your water.

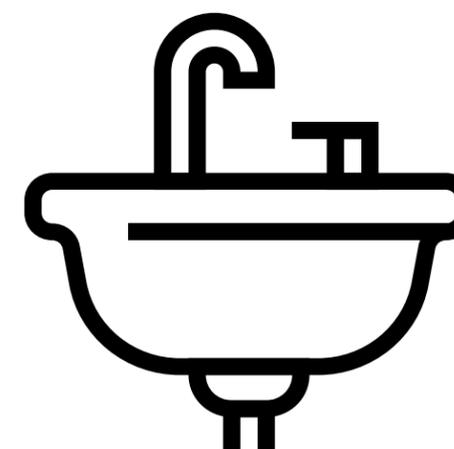
What You Can Do

- Test your kitchen tap for lead.
- A temporary solution is to run water until it is cold when using for cooking and drinking. Only use cold water for drinking and cooking and making formula and ice cubes.
- A long-term solution is to replace any lead parts in your water system (for example, pipes, plumbing fixtures, and fittings).
- Be aware that boiling water does not remove lead.
- Keep your children from drinking water from hoses. Vinyl in hoses may contain lead.
- Call the Vermont Department of Health Laboratory at 802-338-4724 to order a lead in drinking water test kit or visit www.HealthVermont.gov/water/lead for more information.

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.



Lead in Hobbies and Activities

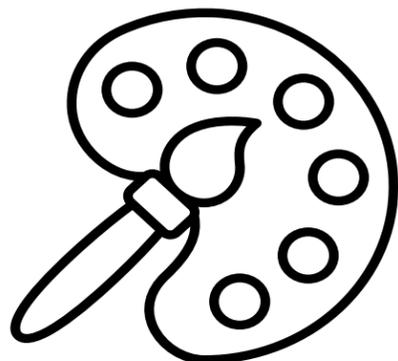
Are You At Risk?

Do you engage in any hobbies or activities that use lead?

Check the list on page 11 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 activity.
- Clean the area where you do your hobby using lead-safe cleaning methods.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after using lead.
- Keep clothes used with your hobby separate from street clothes.
- Wash clothes used with your hobby or activity separately from other clothes.
- Shower and wash your face and hair immediately after using lead with your hobby or activity.
- Be aware that marine, auto, bicycle or other commercial paints may still contain lead.



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
- Working with bullets, shot, explosives, fireworks
- Making or repairing firearms
- Melting lead for fishing sinkers or bullets
- Playing with lead figurines
- Using pool cue chalk

Other

- Distilling liquor
- Maple sugaring using old equipment with lead parts or solder
- 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?

Does your child play with metal keys?

Does your child use products that have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission?

If so, your child may be at risk for lead exposure.

What You Can Do

- Keep children away from products with lead.
- Do not let children play with metal keys or other metal objects.
- Regularly check the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at www.cpsc.gov for recalls of lead products.



Where It Is Found

Here is a list 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 Often Handled by Children

- Car and house keys
- Key chains
- Zipper pulls
- Anything brass or bronze

Other

- Automotive, marine and commercial (non-house) paints
- Fuel for off-road uses, including aircraft, racing cars, farm equipment and marine engines
- 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?

Have you used salvaged building materials in your home?

Do you use pottery or ceramics made in other countries, especially Mexico and China?

Do you have vinyl miniblinds that did not come with a lead-free label?

Do you have candles with metal-cored wicks?

Check the list on the next page for common household products that may contain lead.

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. Seal components that were stripped with at least 2 coats of sealer.
- Ensure glazed pottery is labeled 'lead-free' or 'food safe'.
- 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

Here is a list of household products and furnishings that may contain lead:

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?

Do you eat food that comes in imported cans?

Do you use home remedies or cosmetics imported from other countries?

Check the list of examples of imported products that may contain lead on the next page.

What You Can Do

- Avoid candy that comes from from Mexico.
- Avoid food that comes in imported cans as they may have lead solder.
- Avoid use of imported home remedies or cosmetics.



Where It Is Found

Here is a list of imported products from some countries that may contain lead:

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

Resources

Vermont Department of Health Environmental Health

Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

280 State Drive

Waterbury, VT 05671-8350

800-439-8550

802-863-7220

HealthVermont.gov/lead

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Healthy & Lead-Safe Homes

58 East State Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

802-828-5064

800-290-0527

vhcb.org

City of Burlington Community and Economic Development Office

BurlingtonVT.gov/cedo

Burlington Lead Program

149 Church Street, Rm 32

Burlington, VT 05401

802-865-5323 (LEAD)

BurlingtonVT.gov/blp