

Facts About Lead Safety

From United Way Success By 6



Facts

- 1 out of every 11 children in the U.S. has dangerous levels of lead in their bloodstream. The most recent national survey shows that nearly 1 million children are lead poisoned.
- You cannot see, taste or smell lead that might contaminate your drinking water.
- Lead exposure can harm young children and babies, even before they are born.
- Lead is more dangerous to children than adults because their brains and nervous systems are still developing.
- Babies and children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning because they put objects in their mouths.
- Children with healthy diets absorb less lead.
- Even children that seem healthy can have high levels of lead in their bodies.
- In most cases, lead paint that is in good condition is not a hazard.
- Removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family.
- N.Y.S. law requires that tenants and potential home buyers be notified of possible lead presence.

Lead Gets In The Body When We...

- ...put hands or objects covered with lead dust in our mouths.
- ...eat paint chips or soil that contain lead.
- ...breathe lead dust, especially during renovations that disturb paint.

Leads Harmful Effects

If not detected early, children with lead in their bodies can suffer from:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Behavior problems (such as hyperactivity)
- Learning disorders or retardation
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Headaches

Lead is also harmful to adults. Lead poisoning may cause:

- Difficulties during pregnancy
- Other reproductive problems (in both men and women)
- High blood pressure
- Digestive problems
- Nerve disorders
- Memory and concentration problems
- Muscle and joint pain

Where Lead Hazards Are Found

Many homes built before 1978 have lead based paint. The Federal government banned lead-based paint in 1978 from housing. Lead can be found in city, country, and suburban homes; in apartments and single-family homes, in public and private housing. Common areas where lead paint may be found are window sills, doors and door frames, stairs, railings, porches, and fences, and in the soil around the home where paint chips have fallen.

Lead may also be found in painted toys, drinking water from plumbing that contains lead solder, foods or liquids stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery or porcelain.

Lead dust can form when lead-based paint is dry scraped or dry sanded. Dust also forms when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead dust or chips can get on surfaces or objects that people touch. Settled dust can reenter the air when we vacuum, sweep or walk through it. Lead in the soil can be a hazard when children play in bare soil or when people bring soil into the house on their shoes

Test Your Family For Lead

A simple blood test can determine if lead is present.

Blood tests are important for:

- Children 6 months to 2 years
- Family members that you think might have high levels of lead

If your child is older than 2 years, ask your doctor about whether a test should be conducted. Blood tests are inexpensive or sometimes free and are covered by Medicaid and most insurance providers.

Treatment for lead poisoning can range from diet changes to medication to hospitalization.

Checking Your Home For Lead Hazards

You can get your home checked for lead hazards in one or both of the following ways:

- **Paint Inspection.** This will tell you if you have lead paint in your house. It will not tell you if there is a risk of poisoning and it will not tell you how to remedy the situation.
- **Risk Assessment.** This will tell you if there are sources of lead exposure (peeling paint, dust, etc.) and how to remedy the situation.

Testing for lead can be done with do-it-yourself kits or through professional contractors. Home test kits may not always be reliable. When using a contractor, be sure he or she is licensed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Trained professionals use a range of methods when checking your home including a visual inspection of paint condition and location, a portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) machine, lab tests of paint samples, and surface dust tests.

Simple Steps To Protect Your Family From Lead Hazards

If you think your home has high levels of lead:

- Get your children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy.
- Get your home tested for lead hazards.
- If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- Clean up paint chips immediately but do not vacuum or sweep them.
- Wash your children's hands often, especially before they eat and sleep.
- Wash your children's bottles, pacifiers, toys and play areas often.
- Discourage children from chewing on painted surfaces.
- Cook only with cold water. Run tap water for 15 to 30 seconds before drinking it.
- Feed your children regular, healthy meals that include iron and calcium, which help keep the body from absorbing lead. Avoid fatty foods and junk foods, which allow the body to absorb lead faster.
- Regularly clean floors, windows, sills and other surfaces. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead.

Never mix ammonia and bleach because they will form a dangerous gas! Thoroughly rinse mops and sponges after washing.

- Wipe soil off shoes before entering your home.
- Don't try to remove lead-based paint yourself.
- Plant grass to around outdoor play areas.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling (call 1-800-424 LEAD for guidelines).

Remodeling Or Renovating Your Home That Contains Lead Based Paint

There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of lead poisoning when you or a contractor remodels your home:

- Have your home tested for lead-based paint.
- Don't use a belt-sander, propane torch, dry sandpaper, or dry scraper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.
- Temporarily move your family, especially pregnant women and children, until the work is done and your home is thoroughly cleaned.
- If you cannot move your family, completely seal-off the work area and thoroughly clean the whole house when the work is done.
- Call 1-800-424-LEAD or go to <http://www.hud.gov/lea/leahome.html> and request the brochure, "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home."

Lead Abatement

Parents looking for a contractor to do abatement work should hire contractors who have been certified in lead safe work practices or who are licensed to do lead abatement work. Their methods include removing, sealing or enclosing lead-based paint with special materials, equipment and trained employees.

To find a qualified lead abatement contractor, contact:

Chautauqua Home Rehab and Improvement Corp
Mayville: 753-4650

[Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2](#)
2890 Woodbridge Ave., Building 209
Edison, NJ 08837-3679
(732) 321-6671

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