

LEAD Poisoning Prevention

LEAD is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. You can get LEAD poisoning by swallowing or breathing in LEAD. Children under age 6 and unborn babies of pregnant women are most at risk for LEAD poisoning.

How does LEAD harm the body?

For a child, LEAD can:

- Delay growth and development
- Affect attention and learning
- Impair hearing and speech

For a pregnant woman, LEAD can:

- Put you at risk of miscarriage
- Cause prematurity or baby with low birth weight
- Harm baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system

How do you know if you have LEAD poisoning?

The only way to know if you have LEAD poisoning is to have a blood test. If you think you or your child have been exposed to LEAD, contact your local health department or health care provider for more information.

LEAD poisoning is the number one preventable environmental health risk of young children.

How are we exposed to LEAD?

- Primary source of exposure is from the chips, flakes, and dust of deteriorating LEAD-based paint in homes built before 1978.
- The main way children are exposed to LEAD is by putting LEAD-contaminated hands or objects into their mouth.
- Exposure may occur outside the home through a job or hobby and then brought into the home on the person's skin, clothes or shoes.
- LEAD can be inhaled through dust and fumes.
- Exposure through tap water may occur if you have plumbing with LEAD water pipes or pipes soldered with LEAD.
- Metal objects like fishing sinkers, bullets, keys and costume jewelry can be a source of exposure.
- Items like candy, makeup, folk medicine, glazed pots, and toys made outside the United States may contain LEAD.



Tips for lowering exposure to LEAD:

- If renovating a home built before 1978, keep pregnant women and children out of the home to help avoid exposure.
- Minimize LEAD dust through daily cleaning: dusting with a clean damp rag, vacuuming using HEPA filter vacuum and wet mopping.
- Handwashing with soap and water is especially important for young children who often put their hands and other objects in their mouth.
- If a family member is exposed to LEAD outside the home, have them shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash their clothes separately from the family's clothes.

Nutrition Tips to Reduce LEAD Absorption

An empty stomach may absorb more LEAD than a full stomach; try to eat 4 to 6 small meals during the day.

Exposure to LEAD is less likely if you:

- Wash hands before every snack or meal.
- Do not eat food that has touched the floor, or any other surface that may have LEAD.
- Run cold tap water for one minute before using if you have LEAD pipes in your home.

**Calcium, Iron and Vitamin C
may help reduce LEAD absorption.**
Eat foods high in these nutrients.

Calcium

- Low fat milk, yogurt, tofu, cheese
- Foods made with low fat milk
- Green leafy vegetables (collards, spinach, broccoli)

Iron

- Lean meats and fish
- Iron fortified cereals and whole grains
- Dried beans
- Dried fruits (raisins, cranberries, prunes)

Vitamin C

- Oranges, grapefruit, mangos, strawberries
- Green and red peppers
- Tomatoes
- 100% Juice (Limit to 4-6 oz. per day)

For more tips to keep your family safe from LEAD: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/parents.htm>; <https://www.epa.gov/lead>.

Have your home inspected by a licensed LEAD inspector. For more information, call the National Lead Information Center (1-800-424-LEAD) or contact your local health department.



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