

Protecting Your Child from Lead

CHILDREN AT GREATER RISK

Lead is a poisonous metal that can hurt children and adults. Because their bodies are growing so quickly, kids six or younger are at greater risk of permanent damage to their brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems.

LEAD AWARENESS AND YOUR CHILD

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood test.

Ask your doctor or health care provider to test your child at ages 1 and 2.

LEAD EXPOSURE IN YOUR HOME

Lead-based paint is a hazard if it's peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. When paint is scraped, sanded, or simply rubbed up against by furniture or objects in the home, contaminated dust can form and gather on surfaces that children touch or put in their mouths. Even lead-based paint that appears to be undisturbed can be dangerous if it's on surfaces that children chew or that get a lot of wear and tear. The older your home, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

OTHER SOURCES OF LEAD

Your yard could be a source of exposure if soil has been contaminated from cracking or peeling exterior paint, or from vehicle exhaust when gas was lead-based. Avoid letting children play around the foundation of older homes or near roadways. Use a sandbox instead. Also avoid these areas when planting vegetables or fruit.

Be cautious of medicines, cosmetics, spices, glazed pottery, toys, and foods or candy from other countries. All of these could contain lead.

IMPORTANT TIPS

- ✓ Use only **COLD tap water when preparing baby formula, cooking, or drinking**, as hot water is more likely to have higher levels of lead.
- ✓ Make sure children wash their hands frequently to rinse off any lead dust or dirt, especially before meals or bedtime.
- ✓ Floors, windowsills, and other surfaces should be wet mopped or wiped every few weeks to keep them free of lead dust or dirt.
- ✓ Maintain healthy eating habits and diet for your family to reduce the effects of lead. Feed your children foods high in vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

As a parent of a young child, or an expecting parent, it's important to make sure your home is safe for your child or newborn. Contact your county health department for more information and to schedule a home lead assessment.

www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead

