



Runs better unleaded

How to Protect Your Children
from Lead Poisoning



United States
Environmental Protection Agency
(7404)
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use
\$300

For more information about preventing lead poisoning, call the
National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD or visit www.epa.gov/lead.



Follow these steps to protect your children's health.



Get your child and your home tested if you live in a home built before 1978. Children who have high blood levels of lead may appear healthy.



Clean up paint chips using a wet sponge or rag. Completely rinse sponges and mop heads after cleaning dirty or dusty areas.



Avoid exposure to harmful lead dust. Hire a professional to remove lead-based paint, or when renovating or remodeling—don't do it yourself.



Use cold tap water for drinking or cooking since lead is more likely to leach into warm or hot water. Run tap water for 15-30 seconds (or until it feels much colder on your hand) before drinking it.



Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead-contaminated soil.



Make sure children wash their hands after playing outside and before eating or going to bed. Have children play in grassy areas instead of bare soil.



Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly. Keep your home clean by washing floors and window sills weekly.



Keep children from chewing on painted surfaces, such as windowsills, cribs, or playpens or from playing near painted surfaces that rub together.



Make sure your family eats a well-balanced diet low in fat and high in calcium and iron to reduce absorption of lead into the body.



If you rent property, tell your landlord about peeling or chipping paint.

Do you know that lead poisoning can pose a serious risk to your child's health?

Lead is a toxic substance that may be present in dust, paint, soil, and drinking water. When ingested or inhaled as dust, lead poses a serious health risk to young children. Low levels of lead exposure can cause nervous system and kidney damage, learning disabilities, poor muscle coordination, slower growth, hearing losses, and also speech, language, and behavior problems. While low-level exposure is most common, exposure to high levels can have devastating effects including seizures, unconsciousness, and even death. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that 1 in 11 American children has high levels of lead in their blood. Fortunately, there are simple ways to assess lead risks and protect your child's health.

If you live in a home built before 1978, keep reading for more information!



What are the common sources of dangerous lead?



Lead is still prevalent in housing built before 1978, and poses risks in the form of lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust, lead-contaminated soil, and older plumbing fixtures made with lead. Before we knew how harmful lead could be, it was used in paint, gasoline, water pipes, and many other products. Now we know the dangers of lead poisoning and have banned or limited the use of lead in these products. However, this has not eliminated the risk.



When are these sources hazardous?

Lead-based paint is a hazard if it's peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. Even lead-based paint that appears to be undisturbed can be a problem if it covers surfaces that children may chew or that get a lot of wear and tear such as windows, windowsills, doors, stairs, railings, banisters, porches, and fences.

Dust can become contaminated with lead when lead-based paint is dry-scraped or sanded. Dust can also become contaminated when older painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can gather on surfaces and objects that people touch or that children put into their mouths.

Soil can become contaminated by flaking or peeling lead-based paint on older buildings. Soil near roadways may also be contaminated by past use of leaded gasoline in cars. Avoid these areas when planting vegetable gardens.

Lead can leach into the water at any temperature, but the amount of lead can be much greater when the water is hot or warm. Don't drink or cook with water from the "hot" faucet if you live in an older home or think you have lead plumbing fixtures.