

Facts About Lead-Based Paint

This fact sheet includes:

- Health Effects of Lead
- Having Your Children Tested for Lead Poisoning
- Lead-Based Paint in Homes Built Before 1978
- Reducing Your Risks
- Lead Disclosure Laws
- Precautions When Remodeling
- Some Other Sources of Lead Exposure

Lead-based paint can be found in buildings in the city, country, apartments or single-family homes, and inside or outside of homes. Lead-based paint was heavily used in homes built before 1960, but was phased out of paint in 1978. In general, the older the home or structure, the more likely it is to have lead-based paint. It is most commonly found on windows, trim, doors, railings, columns, porches and exterior walls.

There are two ways lead can get into your body, through breathing or swallowing lead dust particles, and by eating chips, dust or soil containing lead based-paint.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead is most harmful to children six-years-old or younger because children often put their hands and other objects in to their mouth which may have lead dust on them. Growing bodies absorb more lead, and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead.

Health effects of lead in children can include behavioral and learning problems (hyperactivity), slowed growth, hearing problems, headaches and damage to the brain and central nervous system.

Adults exposed to lead can suffer from reproductive problems, high blood pressure, digestive disorders, muscle and joint pain, memory and concentration problems, and nerve disorders.

Having Your Children Tested for Lead Poisoning

If you live in a home built prior to 1978 and the paint is in poor condition, or you have been or are remodeling, you should talk to your physician about having your children tested. A simple blood test by a physician is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning. Blood lead tests are especially important for babies and toddlers since their blood levels tend to increase rapidly from 6 to 12 months and peak at 18 to 24 months of age. Children older than one year should have a blood test every couple of years or every year if the house or apartment contains lead paint or if you use lead in your job or hobby.

Lead-Based Paint in Homes Built Before 1978

A paint inspection will determine if there is lead content in the paint. A risk assessment will determine if there are any sources of lead exposure which may be hazardous and what actions you need to take.

Testing and assessments should be done by qualified individuals who are certified lead-based paint professionals. For a list of certified professionals, visit EPA's website at www.epa.gov/r10earth/lead.htm, or call the Idaho Indoor Environment Program at 1-800-445-8647.

Reducing Your Risks

There are simple steps that can be taken to reduce exposure to lead:

- Keep the areas your children play in as dust-free and clean as possible.
- Ensure that your children have a nutritious diet strong in iron and calcium. This will reduce the amount of lead their body takes in.
- Keep children from chewing on window sills or other painted surfaces.
- Wash children's hands often throughout the day, especially before meals and bedtime.
- Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
- Clean-up paint chips immediately.
- Notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- Clean floors, window frames, window sills, and other surfaces *weekly* using warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner. **NEVER MIX AMMONIA AND BLEACH AS THEY CAN FORM A DANGEROUS GAS.**
- Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- Bath pets on a regular basis to reduce the amount of dirt they bring in from the outside.

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