

# Lead Poisoning Prevention During Pregnancy

Pregnant women at risk of being exposed to lead should get a blood lead test. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, talk to your doctor to find out if you are at risk.

**Lead poisoning** is what happens when **too much lead gets in the body**. Normal body functions are harmed when humans breathe in or ingest lead. Lead is especially harmful for small children and pregnant women. **In pregnant women, lead can harm both the mother and the fetus.** If the mother is exposed to lead during or before pregnancy, she can pass it on to her unborn baby.

## **Lead exposure during pregnancy can cause:**

- Increased risk of having a miscarriage
- Increased risk of the baby being born too early
- Damage to the baby's brain and nervous system
- The baby to have a low birth weight
- Future learning and behavior problems in the baby

## ***Here are a few things you can do to keep yourself and your baby safe from the harmful effects of lead:***

- **Wet-wipe and wet-mop around windowsills and home entrances.** Lead is found in cracked and flaking paint in homes built before 1978. These paint flakes create lead dust. Wet-wiping and wet-mopping prevents lead dust from getting into the air and being inhaled.
- **Wash your hands often.** Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This will get rid of any lead you might have gotten on your hands during the day.
- **Eat nutritious meals full of iron, calcium, and vitamin C.** Eating iron, calcium, and vitamin C will help keep lead out of you and your baby's body.
- **Remove your shoes before going inside your house.** This will keep you from accidentally bringing lead into your home on the bottom of your shoes.
- **Protect yourself if a family member has a job or hobby that involves lead.** Ask them to take off their shoes before coming inside your home. Also ask them to change their clothes and wash their hands immediately after getting home.
- **Do not remodel your home if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.** Remodeling can cause flakes of lead paint or lead dust to get into the air or onto the floor, where they can be inhaled.