

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION FAQS

The only sure way to find out if your child has been exposed to lead is with a blood lead test. Ask your doctor to test your children at 12 and 24 months.



What is lead?

- Lead is a **highly toxic metal** that occurs naturally in the environment. It has been used for many years in products found in and around our homes.

Who does lead harm?

- Lead harms everyone, but **it is most dangerous for children**. This is because their brains are still developing and they absorb more of the lead they ingest. **It is also dangerous for pregnant women**. If a pregnant woman is exposed to lead it can hurt the unborn child.

How is lead bad for you?

- **In children**, lead causes developmental delays and damage to the nervous system. It also causes a lower intelligence quotient (IQ) and attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- **In adults**, high levels of lead can cause fatigue, memory loss, aches and pains, irritability, and nausea.

How are we exposed to lead?

- **The main source of lead exposure for children is chipping and peeling lead-based paint** (used in homes built before 1978). Other exposure sources include **soil, drinking water, imported toys, folk remedies, and ceramics**.
- **Adults can be exposed through lead-related hobbies or jobs**, like construction, battery recycling, metalwork, and at firing ranges.

How can I reduce the risk of me or my child being exposed to lead?

- **Wet-wipe and wet-mop** around windowsills and home entrances, **wash hands** frequently, prevent children from playing in bare soil, **run tap water for 60 seconds** before cooking with it, **cook nutrient dense meals** high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Adults with lead-related work or hobbies should **remove shoes** before entering the home and **immediately change clothes and wash hands** after coming home.

