



Lead Poisoning Prevention During Pregnancy

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 young 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



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.

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 that 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.



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