

# LEAD IN ALUMINUM COOKWARE



**Lead is a highly toxic metal.** It is especially harmful for young children because they are still growing and developing. Exposure to lead can lead to many different health issues, such as:

- Brain and nervous system damage
- Slowed growth and development
- Hearing and speech problems
- Learning and behavior issues

The best way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is with a blood lead test. Talk to a health care provider about having your child tested for lead in their blood.

**Unfortunately, many items can contain lead.** Even items you might not expect, including traditional cookware like imported aluminum cookpots and pressure cookers. Food prepared in aluminum cookpots and pressure cookers can become contaminated by lead. Food contaminated with lead is very dangerous for people to eat.



*Photo courtesy of King County Hazardous Waste Management Program*

## Practice your traditions while staying safe from lead exposure:

- Cook delicious dishes using stainless steel cookware. It is less likely to contain lead.
- Do not store food in any aluminum cookware or pressure cookers. Any lead inside the metal might leach out and contaminate the food. Store food in glass containers instead.
- Use wooden or silicone cooking utensils. This will prevent the metal from getting scratched while cooking. If the metal gets scratched, it can release lead into the food.
- Purchase spices sold in the United States. Your food will still taste delicious, and will be lead-free.
- Try to cook on low or medium heat only, and hand-wash all dishes with warm water.



Learn more:  
[www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/)

