

# Lead Poisoning Prevention

## *What is lead and where is it found?*

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that is toxic to humans. Many lead exposures happen at home, through lead-based paint, dust, soil, toys, or drinking water.

## *Who is at risk?*

**Children:** Children's bodies absorb more lead than adults, and their brains are very sensitive to the damaging effects. Lead poisoning can result in developmental delays, reduced hearing, and brain or kidney damage.

**Pregnant Women:** During pregnancy, lead can pass from mother to baby and potentially harm a developing fetus or infant.

**Adults:** Adults exposed to lead can suffer from symptoms such as cardiovascular effects, decreased kidney function, and reproductive problems.



## *How can you lower your chances of exposure to lead?*

- Inspect the paint in your house for chipping or peeling, especially if your home was built before 1978.
- Keep your house clean and dust-free: mop floors and wipe surfaces often.
- Wash your children's hands and toys regularly.
- Take off your shoes before entering a home.
- Try to cook with (and drink) cold tap water.
- Contact your water utility service or a plumber to check if you have a lead service line.
- Consult a certified lead professional before beginning renovation, repair, or painting projects, as these may create toxic lead dust.

**For more information:** Visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/)



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