

Safety Tips

In addition to having your child screened every year, here are some tips you can use to reduce the risk of high lead levels in young children.

- 1 Keep your home free of chipping and flaking paint.
- 2 Clean, Clean, Clean! Damp dust and wet mop your home and children's play areas frequently (at least two times a week).
- 3 Make sure children don't eat nonfood items or put dirty items in their mouth.
- 4 Have children wash their hands often, especially before eating.
- 5 Practice "First Flush" by running each cold water faucet for 2 to 3 minutes before using. Do this if water stands for more than a few hours.
- 6 Draw drinking water from cold water faucet only. Have water tested for lead, especially if using water to prepare baby formula.
- 7 Do not let children play in abandoned homes, or on empty lots where old wood or plaster is on the ground.
- 8 Keep children away from older buildings that are being painted or renovated.
- 9 Children should not play on old wooden porches.
- 10 Adults who work with lead should shower and change clothes before going home.
- 11 Always wash work clothes separate from those of other family members.

For more information concerning blood screening, contact your family physician, or the

Allegheny County Health Department Healthy Homes & Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

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Facts About



SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Lead Poisoning

SOME FACTS ABOUT LEAD POISONING

It is very important to know the ways of reducing the risk of LEAD POISONING

Lead poisoning is a common problem.

The small amount of lead we normally take into our bodies is easily eliminated. But when too much lead is swallowed, serious damage can happen. Lead affects the brain, the kidneys, red blood cells, and the central nervous system.

People Most Affected By Lead Poison

- 1 Children less than 6 years old.
Primarily 1 to 2 year olds
- 2 The unborn child of a mother who has lead in her system.
- 3 Adults working in areas where lead is processed or used heavily.
- 4 People in older homes that are being renovated.
- 5 People with hobbies that require leaded materials, i.e. ceramics, stained glass products, etc.

Being less developed, small children living in older homes are at highest risk of lead poisoning. They cannot eliminate the small amounts of lead from their growing bodies. Remember, young children learn from exploring, and are likely to crawl and play in dusty or dirty areas. They also seem to put everything into their mouth, and may take in more lead.

Lead poisoning in young children can cause problems with learning, and mental and physical growth development. In high levels, lead poisoning can cause coma and even death.

In many cases, a child shows no signs of lead poisoning. When symptoms do show, they are similar to many other illnesses. Your children should be tested if:

- * You live in a house built before 1950
- * The child puts their fingers or other objects in their mouths
- * The child visits or spends time at another old home

REMEMBER THE ONLY WAY TO BE SURE THE SYMPTOMS ARE RELATED TO LEAD POISONING IS TO HAVE A BLOOD TEST.

Sources Of Lead Poisoning

The greatest source of lead poisoning is the lead based paints in houses built before 1950 that chips, peels, or flakes. Other sources of lead in the environment are:

- * Toys and crayons that are imported from foreign countries.
- * Old lead pipes or copper water lines and fixtures joined with lead solder.
- * Soil contaminated with chips of exterior lead based paint, lead based insect spray, or highway pollution.

All children from 9 months to 6 years old should be screened once a year, regardless of where they live.

DON'T WAIT FOR SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF LEAD POISONING!