

How can my child get lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning is a health problem, especially for young children.

Lead dust from peeling or damaged paint is the most common source of lead poisoning. Lead dust can also be present on windowsills, floors or toys. When children play on the floor or put their hands and toys in their mouths, they can swallow lead dust.

Children can also be exposed to lead from:

- Unsafe home repairs
- Imported foods, spices, cosmetics and medications; imported toys and jewelry.
- “take home lead” brought into a home by person working with lead or has hobbies with lead exposures

Lead poisoning in children can cause learning and behavioral problems, and even small amounts of lead could be dangerous.

The effects of lead poisoning may not be noticed until the child starts school.

Where can lead be found?

Lead is found in:



- Dust and paint chips from old paint
- Homes built before 1960, especially those in need of repair.



- Soil that has lead in it.
- Dust brought home on the clothing of family members with jobs that use lead, such as making batteries or smelting companies.
- Unsafe home repairs and paint jobs
- Hobby materials such as stained glass, paints, solders, fishing weights, and buckshot.
- Home remedies like asarco, greta, pay, loah.
- Food stored in some ceramic dishes (especially dishes made outside the USA).
- Painted toys and antique furniture such as cribs.
- Tap water in homes that have lead pipes.
- Mini-blinds made outside the United States before July 1996.



NYC banned the use of lead paint in 1960.

How can I protect my child from getting lead poisoning?

Many ways are simple and low-cost:

- Find and fix peeling paint in your home and other places where children spend a lot of time. Only use paint that does not contain lead.
- Parents should report peeling paint to their landlords. NYC law requires landlords to annually inspect and fix peeling paint in apartments with children under six years old. If landlords refuse to

fix the peeling paint, call 311 and request an inspection.

- Have children wash their hands often, especially before eating and after playing outside.
- Wash toys, pacifiers and other items that children put in their mouths.
- Clean floors and window sills with a damp mop and detergent.
- Never mix baby formula using hot tap water.
- Use only cold water for drinking, making beverages and cooking. Before drinking, run the faucet until the water feels cold to the touch.
- If you work with lead at your job, shower and remove work clothes at the job. Wash work clothes separately from the family laundry.
- Give children a healthy diet rich in calcium and iron and low in fat. Calcium and iron reduce the amount of lead absorbed by the body.

Should My Child Be tested for Lead?

- Every child should have a lead test when she or he is one year old and again at age two.
- Doctors must check children aged 6 months to 6 years for exposure to lead during routine well-child visits. If the child has not had routine visits, the doctor should check once each year.

Is my child at risk for lead poisoning?

If you can answer "yes" to any of the following questions, your child may be at risk.

- Does your child live in or visit a house built before 1978 that has been remodeled in the last 6 months? Are there any plans to remodel?
- Does your child have a brother, sister, or playmate who is being treated for lead poisoning?
- Does your child live with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead?
- Does your child live within one block of a major highway or busy street?
- Do you use hot tap water for cooking or drinking?
- Has your child ever been given home remedies (asarco, greta, pay, loah)?
- Has your child lived outside the United States?
- Does your family use pottery or ceramics for cooking, eating, or drinking?

Treatment

If your child has high levels of lead in their blood he or she may need to be treated at the hospital. If the damage is severe, the child may need special schooling and therapy.



Remember

- The only way to know for sure if your child has been exposed to lead is to have the child's doctor test his or her blood.
- Talk to your child's doctor about testing your child for lead levels, especially if your child is under 3 years old.

For more information on Lead Screening, call:

New York City Department of Health at:

212- BAN LEAD (226-5323)

MetroPlus Care Management Line at:

1-800-579-9798

*The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.
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Lead Screening for Children



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