

Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home

 **EPA** United States
Environmental
Protection Agency

 United States
Consumer Product
Safety Commission

 United States
Department of Housing
and Urban Development

IMPORTANT!

Lead From Paint, Dust, and Soil Can Be Dangerous If Not Managed Properly

FACT: Lead exposure can harm young children and babies even before they are born.

FACT: Even children who seem healthy can have high levels of lead in their bodies.

FACT: People can get lead in their bodies by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil or paint chips containing lead.

FACT: People have many options for reducing lead hazards. In most cases, lead-based paint that is in good condition is not a hazard.

FACT: Removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family.

If you think your home might have lead hazards, read this pamphlet to learn some simple steps to protect your family.

Lead's Effects

It is important to know that even exposure to low levels of lead can severely harm children.

In children, lead can cause:

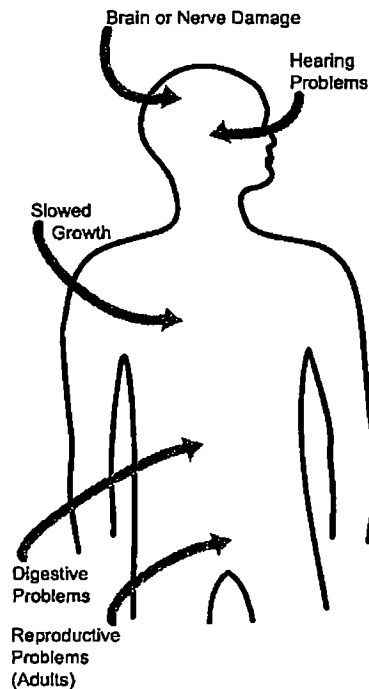
- ◆ Nervous system and kidney damage.
- ◆ Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and decreased intelligence.
- ◆ Speech, language, and behavior problems.
- ◆ Poor muscle coordination.
- ◆ Decreased muscle and bone growth.
- ◆ Hearing damage.

While low-lead exposure is most common, exposure to high levels of lead can have devastating effects on children, including seizures, unconsciousness, and, in some cases, death.

Although children are especially susceptible to lead exposure, lead can be dangerous for adults too.

In adults, lead can cause:

- ◆ Increased chance of illness during pregnancy.
- ◆ Harm to a fetus, including brain damage or death.
- ◆ Fertility problems (in men and women).
- ◆ High blood pressure.
- ◆ Digestive problems.
- ◆ Nerve disorders.
- ◆ Memory and concentration problems.
- ◆ Muscle and joint pain.



**Lead affects
the body in
many ways.**

Identifying Lead Hazards

Lead-based paint is usually not a hazard if it is in good condition, and it is not on an impact or friction surface, like a window. It is defined by the federal government as paint with lead levels greater than or equal to 1.0 milligram per square centimeter, or more than 0.5% by weight.

Deteriorating lead-based paint (peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking or damaged) is a hazard and needs immediate attention. It may also be a hazard when found on surfaces that children can chew or that get a lot of wear-and-tear, such as:

- ◆ Windows and window sills.
- ◆ Doors and door frames.
- ◆ Stairs, railings, banisters, and porches.

Lead dust can form when lead-based paint is scraped, sanded, or heated. Dust also forms when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can get on surfaces and objects that people touch. Settled lead dust can re-enter the air when people vacuum, sweep, or walk through it. The following two federal standards have been set for lead hazards in dust:

- ◆ 40 micrograms per square foot ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$) and higher for floors, including carpeted floors.
- ◆ 250 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$ and higher for interior window sills.

Lead in soil can be a hazard when children play in bare soil or when people bring soil into the house on their shoes. The following two federal standards have been set for lead hazards in residential soil:

- ◆ 400 parts per million (ppm) and higher in play areas of bare soil.
- ◆ 1,200 ppm (average) and higher in bare soil in the remainder of the yard.

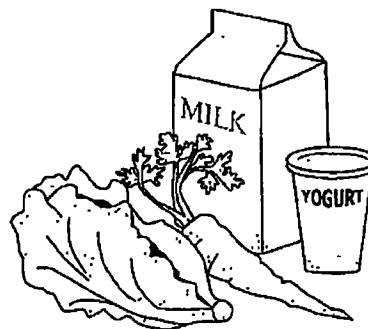
The only way to find out if paint, dust and soil lead hazards exist is to test for them. The next page describes the most common methods used.

Lead from paint chips, which you can see, and lead dust, which you can't always see, can both be serious hazards.

What You Can Do Now To Protect Your Family

If you suspect that your house has lead hazards, you can take some immediate steps to reduce your family's risk:

- ◆ If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- ◆ Clean up paint chips immediately.
- ◆ Clean floors, window frames, window sills, and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead. REMEMBER: NEVER MIX AMMONIA AND BLEACH PRODUCTS TOGETHER SINCE THEY CAN FORM A DANGEROUS GAS.
- ◆ Thoroughly rinse sponges and mop heads after cleaning dirty or dusty areas.
- ◆ Wash children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
- ◆ Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
- ◆ Keep children from chewing window sills or other painted surfaces.
- ◆ Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- ◆ Make sure children eat nutritious, low-fat meals high in iron and calcium, such as spinach and dairy products. Children with good diets absorb less lead.



Remodeling or Renovating a Home With Lead-Based Paint

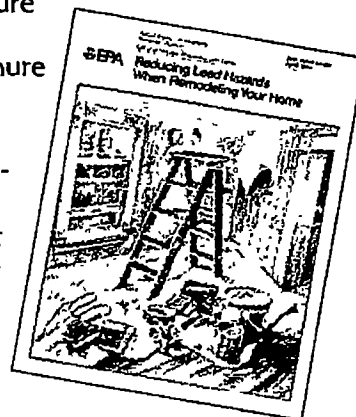
Take precautions before your contractor or you begin remodeling or renovating anything that disturbs painted surfaces (such as scraping off paint or tearing out walls):

- ◆ **Have the area tested for lead-based paint.**
- ◆ **Do not use a belt-sander, propane torch, high temperature heat gun, dry scraper, or dry sandpaper** to remove lead-based paint. These actions create large amounts of lead dust and fumes. Lead dust can remain in your home long after the work is done.
- ◆ **Temporarily move your family** (especially children and pregnant women) out of the apartment or house until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned. If you can't move your family, at least completely seal off the work area.
- ◆ **Follow other safety measures to reduce lead hazards.** You can find out about other safety measures by calling 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask for the brochure "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home." This brochure explains what to do before, during, and after renovations.

If you have already completed renovations or remodeling that could have released lead-based paint or dust, get your young children tested and follow the steps outlined on page 7 of this brochure.



If not conducted properly, certain types of renovations can release lead from paint and dust into the air.



For More Information

The National Lead Information Center

Call **1-800-424-LEAD (424-5323)** to learn how to protect children from lead poisoning and for other information on lead hazards. To access lead information via the web, visit **www.epa.gov/lead** and **www.hud.gov/offices/lead/**.

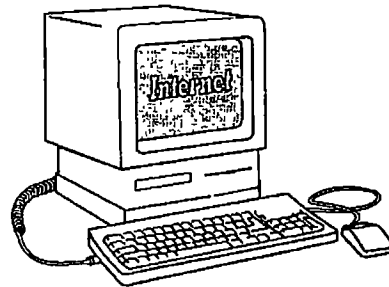


EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline

Call **1-800-426-4791** for information about lead in drinking water.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Hotline

To request information on lead in consumer products, or to report an unsafe consumer product or a product-related injury call **1-800-638-2772**, or visit CPSC's Web site at: **www.cpsc.gov**.



Health and Environmental Agencies

Some cities, states, and tribes have their own rules for lead-based paint activities. Check with your local agency to see which laws apply to you. Most agencies can also provide information on finding a lead abatement firm in your area, and on possible sources of financial aid for reducing lead hazards. Receive up-to-date address and phone information for your local contacts on the Internet at **www.epa.gov/lead** or contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD**.

For the hearing impaired, call the Federal Information Relay Service at **1-800-877-8339** to access any of the phone numbers in this brochure.

CPSC Regional Offices

Your Regional CPSC Office can provide further information regarding regulations and consumer product safety.

Eastern Regional Center
Consumer Product Safety Commission
201 Varick Street, Room 903
New York, NY 10014
(212) 620-4120

Western Regional Center
Consumer Product Safety Commission
1301 Clay Street, Suite 610-N
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 637-4050

Central Regional Center
Consumer Product Safety Commission
230 South Dearborn Street, Room 2944
Chicago, IL 60604
(312) 353-8260

HUD Lead Office

Please contact HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control for information on lead regulations, outreach efforts, and lead hazard control and research grant programs.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control
451 Seventh Street, SW, P-3206
Washington, DC 20410
(202) 755-1785

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U.S. CPSC Washington DC 20207
U.S. HUD Washington DC 20410

EPA747-K-99-001
June 2003