

How to Prevent Lead Poisoning in Children

Accessible Version: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/docs/how-to-prevent-lead-poisoning-in-children.html>

No safe level of lead in children has been identified. Even low levels of lead in blood can hurt a child's ability to learn, pay attention, and do well in school.

The good news is that childhood lead poisoning is preventable. Learn about common sources of lead and steps to reduce your child's risk of lead exposure.

Know the common sources of lead

Lead can be found where children live, play, and learn.



Paint. In homes or buildings built before 1978, assume that the paint contains lead unless tests show otherwise. When the paint peels and cracks, it makes lead paint chips and dust. Children can be exposed to lead if they eat flaking paint chips or breathe in lead dust.



Soil. Lead particles from exterior lead-based paint, leaded gasoline, aviation fuel and lead industries can settle in soil and last for years. Children can be exposed to lead in soil by swallowing or breathing in lead-contaminated soil while playing. This soil can also get on shoes and clothes and be brought into the home or other locations where children spend time.



Water. Some water pipes, faucets, and plumbing fixtures may contain lead that can get into drinking water.



Consumer products. Lead can be found in toys, jewelry, antiques, and collectible items. Some glazes used on ceramics, china, and porcelain also contain lead, which might get into food.



Imported foods and medicines. Some candies, candy wrappers, spices, cosmetics, traditional medicines, and ceremonial or religious powders purchased or brought from outside the US contain lead.



Jobs and hobbies. Certain jobs and hobbies, such as stained-glass work, involve lead-based products and might result in parents or caregivers bringing lead into the home.



More information about the sources of lead can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources.htm>.