

# LEAD Poisoning Prevention

LEAD is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. You can get LEAD poisoning by swallowing or breathing in LEAD. Children under age 6 and unborn babies of pregnant women are most at risk for LEAD poisoning.

## How does LEAD harm the body?

For a child, LEAD can:

- Delay growth and development
- Affect attention and learning
- Impair hearing and speech

For a pregnant woman, LEAD can:

- Put you at risk of miscarriage
- Cause prematurity or baby with low birth weight
- Harm baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system

## How do you know if you have LEAD poisoning?

The only way to know if you have LEAD poisoning is to have a blood test. If you think you or your child have been exposed to LEAD, contact your local health department or health care provider for more information.

**LEAD poisoning is the number one preventable environmental health risk of young children.**

## How are we exposed to LEAD?

- Primary source of exposure is from the chips, flakes, and dust of deteriorating LEAD-based paint in homes built before 1978.
- The main way children are exposed to LEAD is by putting LEAD-contaminated hands or objects into their mouth.
- Exposure may occur outside the home through a job or hobby and then brought into the home on the person's skin, clothes or shoes.
- LEAD can be inhaled through dust and fumes.
- Exposure through tap water may occur if you have plumbing with LEAD water pipes or pipes soldered with LEAD.
- Metal objects like fishing sinkers, bullets, keys and costume jewelry can be a source of exposure.
- Items like candy, makeup, folk medicine, glazed pots, and toys made outside the United States may contain LEAD.



## Tips for lowering exposure to LEAD:

- If renovating a home built before 1978, keep pregnant women and children out of the home to help avoid exposure.
- Minimize LEAD dust through daily cleaning: dusting with a clean damp rag, vacuuming using HEPA filter vacuum and wet mopping.
- Handwashing with soap and water is especially important for young children who often put their hands and other objects in their mouth.
- If a family member is exposed to LEAD outside the home, have them shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash their clothes separately from the family's clothes.

# Nutrition Tips to Reduce LEAD Absorption

**An empty stomach may absorb more LEAD than a full stomach; try to eat 4 to 6 small meals during the day.**

## **Exposure to LEAD is less likely if you:**

- Wash hands before every snack or meal.
- Do not eat food that has touched the floor, or any other surface that may have LEAD.
- Run cold tap water for one minute before using if you have LEAD pipes in your home.

**Calcium, Iron and Vitamin C**  
**may help reduce LEAD absorption.**  
Eat foods high in these nutrients.

**Calcium**

- Low fat milk, yogurt, tofu, cheese
- Foods made with low fat milk
- Green leafy vegetables (collards, spinach, broccoli)

**Iron**

- Lean meats and fish
- Iron fortified cereals and whole grains
- Dried beans
- Dried fruits (raisins, cranberries, prunes)

**Vitamin C**

- Oranges, grapefruit, mangos, strawberries
- Green and red peppers
- Tomatoes
- 100% Juice (Limit to 4-6 oz. per day)

For more tips to keep your family safe from LEAD: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/parents.htm>; <https://www.epa.gov/lead>.

Have your home inspected by a licensed LEAD inspector. For more information, call the National Lead Information Center (1-800-424-LEAD) or contact your local health department.



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