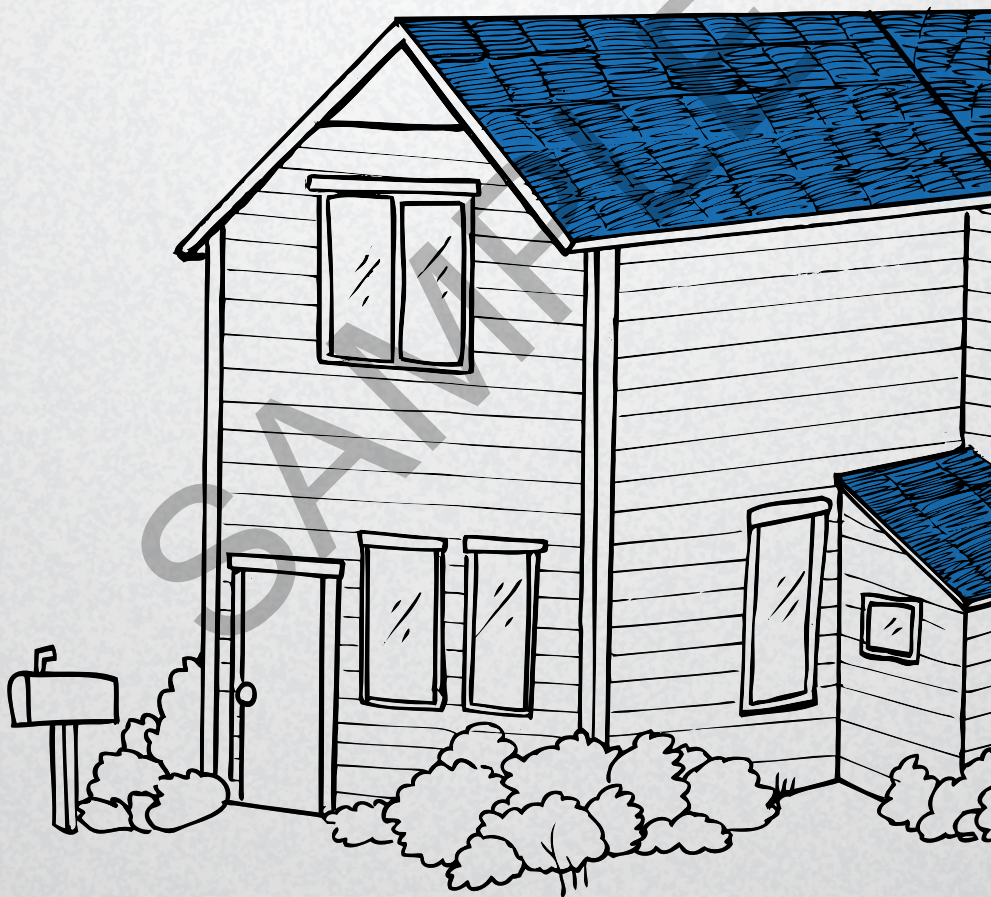


# keys to a healthy home:

# lead



keys to a healthy home:

# lead

paint

pipes

other sources

lead & children

eating healthy

**Lead** is a toxic metal that was often used in paint and pipes before 1978. If it gets in your body, it can cause high blood pressure, nerve disorders, and problems paying attention. It can also cause reproductive problems for men and women.

Lead exposure is very dangerous for children. It can cause hearing loss, learning problems, and violent behavior. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that 1 in 40 American children have too much lead in their bodies.

Although lead can be dangerous, there are some simple steps you can take around your home to keep your family safe and healthy.



# paint

**Lead paint** was used in homes until it was banned in 1978. Lead pigments made the paint last longer and cling to surfaces better. The most common places you'll find lead paint are windowsills, doorframes, stairs, and banisters.



Lead paint was also used on the outside of houses, especially on porches, railings, and fences. The soil around these areas can contain lead, too. Many children ingest lead after playing in contaminated soil.

## What Can You Do?

Gently wipe doorframes, banisters, stairs, railings, windowsills, and walls with a damp paper towel. Throw out the towel when you're done.

Don't disturb peeling or cracked paint; it just spreads more lead around.

Don't scrape, sand, or burn any substance you think might contain lead. It will only disperse the lead further.

Test for lead. You can buy a home test kit at your local hardware store or home improvement center.

# pipes

Water that flows through lead pipes may pick up lead and carry it into your drinking water. The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1988 restricted the use of lead in pipes and solder, and in public water systems, but older pipes may still contain lead.

## What Can You Do?

Inspect your pipes. If pipes in your home are dull gray and scratch easily, they probably contain lead.

Run the cold water for three minutes to flush out built-up lead, especially in the morning or when you haven't used the water for several hours.

Don't drink, cook, or make formula with hot tap water.

Buy a home lead test kit at a hardware store or home improvement center.



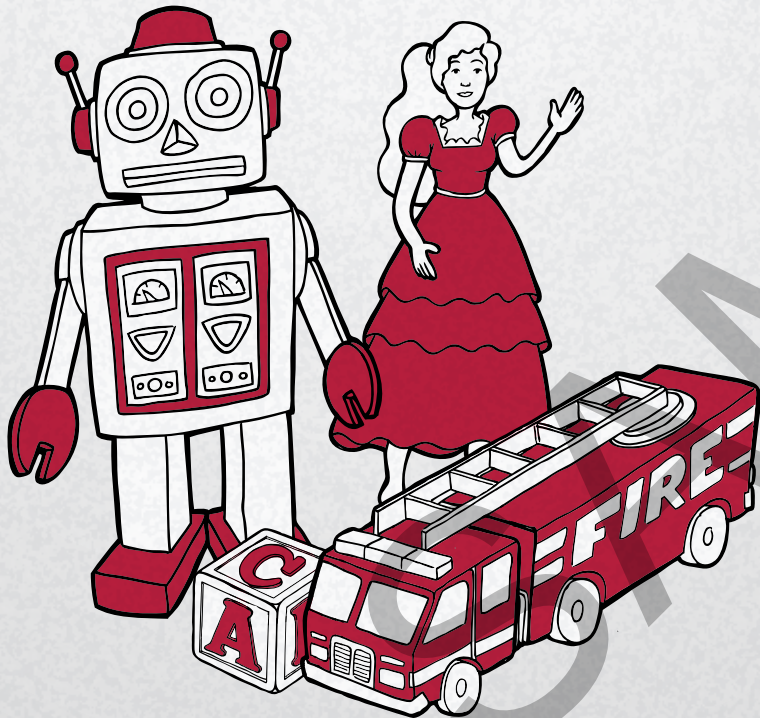


# other sources of lead

## Miniblinds

Some imported, non-glossy miniblinds contain lead. Sunlight and heat can break down blinds and release lead dust.

Don't let children touch miniblinds or put their hands in their mouths. When shopping, look for blinds labeled "New Formulation" or "No Lead Added."



## Painted Toys and Furniture

Lead paint was often used on toys and furniture before 1978. Check for peeling paint, and wash toys regularly. Don't allow children under the age of 6 to play with old toys.

## Imported Canned Foods

Don't buy canned food imported from other countries unless you're sure it's safe.

The United States banned the use of lead solder in 1995, but in some countries it's still used to seal cans.



## Candy from Mexico

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), lead has been found in some candies imported from Mexico. Ingredients in these candies, such as chili powder and tamarind, may be sources of lead exposure.

## Folk Medicines

Lead has been found in folk medicines used by East Indian, Indian, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and Hispanic cultures.

**According to the CDC, the following folk medicines are known to contain lead:**

- **Greta and Azarcon**, taken for upset stomach in Hispanic cultures
- **Ghasard**, an Indian tonic sold as a brown powder
- **Ba-baw-san**, a Chinese herbal remedy for colic pain
- **Daw Tway**, a digestive aid used in Thailand and Myanmar



## Home Renovation

Protect yourself from exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating your home. Children and pregnant women should stay out of the house, and any messy areas should be cleaned up before children are allowed back in.

## Work-related Lead Exposure

Lead can be brought into the home on the clothes, shoes or skin of people who are exposed at work. Make sure people who come into contact with lead remove their shoes before entering your home, as well as wash their clothes and take a shower.

### Jobs with a High Risk for Lead Exposure

- Construction
- Bridge building
- Sandblasting
- Ship building
- Plumbing
- Car repair
- Radiator repair
- Furniture refinishing
- Ceramics
- Foundry casting
- Battery making and recycling

## Do not try to remove lead on your own!

The government requires special training and equipment to fix lead problems. Contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) for help finding a certified contractor in your area. In some cases, financial aid is available. Call 1-800-424-LEAD for more information.

# lead & children

Because children's bodies and immune systems are still growing, they're more likely than adults to be harmed by chemicals and toxins. Lead poisoning is one of the most serious home health risks to children in the United States. Approximately 250,000 children age 5 or younger have high levels of lead.

### Health Risks of Lead Poisoning in Children

- Nervous system and kidney damage
- Learning problems, attention deficit disorder, and brain damage
- Speech, language, and behavior problems
- Poor muscle coordination
- Decreased muscle and bone growth
- Hearing damage

### Signs and Symptoms of Lead Poisoning in Children

A child affected by lead may not look or feel sick. Only a blood test can confirm higher than normal levels of lead. Look for these signs:

- Often tired or hyperactive
- Bad moods
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Short attention span
- Trouble sleeping
- Constipation

It doesn't take much lead to cause serious problems. Lead in children can cause seizures, unconsciousness, and even death. If you suspect your child has lead poisoning, see a doctor right away.



## Keep Children Safe

Children depend on you to keep them safe and healthy. Here are some simple ways you can reduce your family's risk of lead poisoning.

### **Look for cracking, chipping, or flaking paint.**

Don't disturb it or try to remove it yourself. Find a certified lead abatement contractor.

### **Wipe windowsills, railings, doorframes, and floors once a week.**

Use paper towels, warm water and soap. Throw away the paper towels when you're finished.

### **Have your child tested for lead**

Ask your health care provider to test your child at 6 months of age, and again every year until age 6.

### **Teach children to wash their hands and faces**

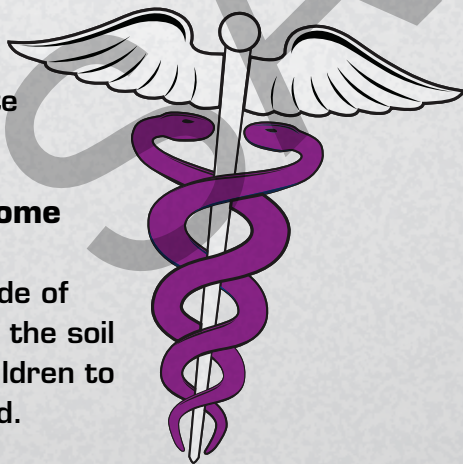
Especially before they eat and before they go to bed.

### **Wash children's toys every week**

Toys made before 1978 could contain lead, but even if toys are new, lead dust can accumulate on them.

### **Test the soil around your home**

Peeling paint on fences, railings and on the outside of houses can contaminate the soil around it. Encourage children to play on the grass instead.



## eating healthy

Eating a healthy and well-balanced diet can help prevent lead poisoning. When you eat nutritious foods, your body won't mistake lead for nutrients. Foods rich in vitamin C, calcium, and iron (see list) can slow the absorption of lead. Fried and fatty foods should be avoided because they hasten the absorption of lead.

Make sure kids and family members eat three nutritious meals a day. Less lead is absorbed when there's food in your system.

### Foods to Eat More Often

- Oranges
- Broccoli
- Strawberries
- Cabbage
- Low-fat milk
- Yogurt
- Spinach
- Fish
- Raisins
- Beans
- Lean meat
- Whole grain cereal

### Foods to Eat Less Often

- Cookies
- Cakes
- Pizza
- Bacon
- Hot dogs
- Sweet drinks
- Potato chips
- French fries
- Candy





# resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
Department of Health and Human Services  
[www.cdc.gov/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/lead)

National Center for Healthy Housing  
[www.nchh.org](http://www.nchh.org)

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences,  
National Institutes of Health  
[www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/lead](http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/lead)

New York State Department of Health  
[www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/lead](http://www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/lead)

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
[www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/5054.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/5054.html)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
[www.HUD.gov](http://www.HUD.gov)

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