

For more information please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/kids/99kidsday/division8.htm>

http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/medical/brain/lead_poisoning.html

<http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/lead.htm>

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**Protect Against
Lead Poisoning**



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HEALTHY LIVING

In the United States, almost 500,000 children under the age of 5 have too much lead in their blood.

WHAT IS LEAD POISONING?

Lead is a toxic metal that can harm you if you are exposed to it. Lead is used in many things like house paint, building materials, gasoline, and even some toys. You cannot see, smell, or taste the lead in your home. Lead poisoning is when lead gets into your body and makes you sick. If untreated, lead poisoning can lead to problems with your kidneys, nerves, and muscles. In children, lead poisoning can cause health problems like slow growth, hearing loss, too much energy, trouble in school, and even brain damage.

WHERE IS LEAD FOUND?

Lead is usually found in homes that are 30 years or older. When those homes were built, many of the materials used had lead in them. At that time, lead was not known to be so dangerous. It is important to check the age of your house or building. If the place you live in is over 30 years old or has peeling paint and dust, you should talk to the owner of your building about testing for lead and fixing any peeling or chipped paint.

HOW DOES LEAD GET INTO THE BODY?

Lead can be in dust and dirt found inside or outside your home. Dust with high amounts of lead settles on furniture, toys, and even food, making these things dangerous to touch or play with if not cleaned. If you eat something with

lead on it, the lead will get into your body. If a home is being repaired, the construction can cause a lot of dust. It is important to clean up areas with dust. Lead can also be in the ground. It is important to wash children's hands after playing outside.

WHO CAN GET LEAD POISONING?

Anyone can get lead poisoning. However, little children are more affected because they are growing. Children's bodies take in lead more easily, and their bodies and brains are more sensitive to lead poisoning. Little children also pick up or chew things which may have lead dust on them. Lead builds up in the blood slowly, and signs of the sickness are not always shown immediately. Many children seem healthy but in fact have lead in their body.

HOW CAN I PREVENT LEAD POISONING?

The best way to prevent lead poisoning is to look out for things around the house that may have lead. If you live in an older house or an older apartment building, the area may have more lead in it. Be careful, and:

- Wash children's hands before after they play and before they eat.
- Clean any bottles, pacifiers, and toys that your children play with or put their mouths on.
- Clean floors and dusty areas with a wet mop or rag.

- If your water pipe is old, use the cold water first—cold water does not let as much lead get into the water as hot water does.
- Clean up and throw away any paint chips that come off old walls.

HOW CAN I MAKE MY CHILDREN STRONGER TO PROTECT FROM LEAD POISONING?

Children who do not get enough calcium and iron in their meals are more likely to be affected by lead poisoning. Calcium is found in dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt. Iron is found in foods like meat, beans, leafy vegetables, and whole grains. When kids eat balanced and healthy meals, they have the right strength to protect from lead poisoning.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS LEAD POISONING?

To protect your child from lead poisoning, it is important to get lead tests. Doctors can give your child a test to see if there is lead in the body. Young children should get this test when receiving their vaccinations or at 1 and 2 years of age. If your home is old and you think there may be lead, have your children tested more frequently. The sooner you know if your child has high amounts of lead in their body, the more quickly it can be treated.