Lead Poisoning Prevention FAQs

The only sure way to find out if your child has been exposed to lead is with a blood lead test. Ask your doctor to test your children at 12 and 24 months.

What is lead?

Lead is a **highly toxic metal** that occurs naturally in the environment. It has been used for many years in products that are found in and around our homes, especially lead-based paint.

Who does lead harm?

Lead is harmful to everyone, but **it is most dangerous for young children**. This is because they are still growing and developing and their body absorbs more of the lead they inhale or ingest. **It is also dangerous for pregnant women**. If a pregnant woman is exposed to lead it can hurt the unborn child.

How is lead dangerous?

In children, lead can cause developmental delays, damage to the brain and nervous system, and hearing and speech problems. It also can cause a lower intelligence quotient (IQ) and attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). **In adults**, high levels of lead can cause fatigue, memory loss, aches and pains, irritability, and nausea.

How are we exposed to lead?

The main source of lead exposure for children is chipping and peeling **lead-based paint** (used in homes built before 1978). Other exposure sources include **soil, drinking water**, **imported/antique toys, traditional remedies and cosmetics, and ceramics**.

Adults can be exposed through lead-related hobbies or jobs, like construction, battery recycling, metalwork, and at firing ranges.

How can I reduce the risks of being exposed to lead?

- Wet-wipe and wet-mop around windowsills and home entrances and wash hands frequently.
- Prevent children from playing in bare soil. If they do, immediately wash their hands and clothes.
- **Run tap water for 60 seconds** before cooking with it, and **cook nutrient dense meals** high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Adults with jobs or hobbies that may expose them to lead should **remove shoes** before entering the home and **immediately change clothes and wash hands** before interacting with their kids.





