



Wallingford Health Department

Childhood Lead Poisoning

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- **What is lead poisoning?**
 - It is a dangerous condition caused by swallowing or inhaling lead.
- **Lead paint is the major source of lead poisoning.**
- It is often found in homes built before 1978.
- Children can swallow or inhale:
 - Chipped or peeling lead paint;
 - Lead dust created when painted surfaces (such as window frames) rub against each other.
- **Other sources of lead include:**
 - **Soil** – from lead paint or leaded gasoline
 - **Water** – from lead found in plumbing
 - **Air** – from lead dust or lead-processing plants
 - **Food** – from lead dust, poorly glazed pottery, lead crystal or imported (not U.S.) cans with lead seams.
- Lead can come from other items too: children’s products (toys, jewelry, clothing and crafts), traditional remedies or cosmetics and fishing weights. Some jobs and hobbies may also involve lead.

Lead can be found throughout a child's environment.



1 Homes built before 1978 (when lead-based paints were banned) probably contain lead-based paint.



When the paint peels and cracks, it makes lead dust. Children can be poisoned when they swallow or breathe in lead dust.



2 Certain water pipes may contain lead.



3 Lead can be found in some products such as toys and toy jewelry.



4 Lead is sometimes in candies imported from other countries or traditional home remedies.



5 Certain jobs and hobbies involve working with lead-based products, like stain glass work, and may cause parents to bring lead into the home.



Young children face the greatest risk!

- **Why does young children are in high risk for lead poisoning?**
 - Because their bodies easily absorb lead, and they often put things into their mouths.
 - **Lead can affect adults and even harm an unborn baby too.**
- **Low lead levels** can cause lasting damage in children. This can make learning and concentration difficult.
- **High lead levels** may cause coma, convulsions and death.
- **Symptoms may be easy to miss! Most children show no symptoms.**
- Or, they may be confused with signs of other illnesses, like the flu. Warning signs of lead poisoning may include:
 - Stomach pains;
 - Constipation;
 - Frequent vomiting;
 - Poor appetite;
 - Sleep problems;
 - Irritability;
 - Tiredness;
 - Headache.
 - Consult your child's health-care provider if you notice any of these signs.



Find out about lead screening

- **There is a test for lead poisoning: a small blood sample is all it takes.**
- **In general, all high-risk children need lead screening.**
- **For example, state or local health officials may consider a child at high risk if he or she:**
 - Lives in or regularly visits a home built before 1950;
 - Lives in or regularly visits a home built before 1978 that has recently been remodeled;
 - Has had a brother or sister with lead problems;
 - Has been adopted from or moved to the U.S. from another country.
- **State or local officials may have other screening guidelines, as well.**
- **Talk to your child's health-care provider.**
 - Ask if your child needs a lead test. It is easy, painless and fast.
- **Find a lead screening location.**
 - Low- or no-cost screenings may be available. Contact your child's health-care provider or another local resource, such as public health department, or WIC (Women, Infants and Children program).



Reduce your child's risk

- **Control lead dust.**

- Clean weekly. Use a solution of warm water and cleaner to wet-mop floors and thoroughly wipe windowsills and other surfaces. You can use a general all-purpose cleaner or a “lead-specific” cleaner. (Don't reuse cloths or sponges on surfaces such as dishes or counters).
- Don't dry-dust, sweep or use a vacuum without HEPA filter on hard surfaces.
- Wipe dirt off shoes before coming inside.
- Don't shake or beat rugs or carpets.
- Don't let your child chew on (or put in his or her mouth) things that may be dirty have lead paint on them.
- If you work with lead, shower and change before coming home. Wash your clothes separately. (Follow all occupational safety guidelines for cleaning and storing work clothes and equipment.)
- Watch for chipping and flaking paint.
- Replace imported vinyl miniblinds made before 1997. Only buy miniblinds that say “lead-free”.



Nutrition is important

- **Feed your child 3 healthy meals a day.**
- A diet in high iron, calcium and vitamin C, and low in fat, can help your child's body absorb less lead. Also:
 - Draw drinking and cooking water only from the cold tap. First, run it for **at least 15-30 seconds**. (Run it for 1-2 minutes if it hasn't been used a few hours.)
 - Wash your hands before preparing snacks or meals.
 - Teach your child to wash his or her hands before eating.
 - Don't use lead-glazed pottery for cooking or serving.





Keep your home safe

- **Keep play areas safe.**
- Fill sandboxes with lead-free play sand.
- Have children play on grass, not dirt.
- Ask local officials if playgrounds are lead-safe.

- **Be alert to other lead risks.**
- Avoid traditional remedies that could have lead in them. These include *great*, *azarcón*, and *pay-loo-ah*.
- To check for recalls of children's products found to have lead, access the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>





Learn more

- **Find out how to:**

- Have your paint, water and soil tested for lead (home tests kits are not recommended).
- Protect yourself and your family if you live in rented housing or are buying a house.
- Safely handle a lead problem: Always hire a certified lead professional to remove or cover lead paint. **The improper removal of lead can make the problem worse.**

- **Contact:**

- The National Lead Information Center at +1 (800) 424-5323 or www.epa.gov/lead
- The EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline at +1 (800) 426-4791
- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at +1 (800) 638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov
- Safe Drinking Water Hotline +1 (800) 426-4791
- Local resources: a health-care provider, Wallingford Health Department, the housing authority or a childhood lead poisoning prevention program.

- **Take steps to keep your child safe from lead.**



Questions and Concerns?

If you would like to learn more about “**Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**”,

Access <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>

If you, your children or someone else is experiencing lead poisoning symptoms,

Talk to you healthcare provider.

If you have any questions and concerns,

Contact the Wallingford Health Department:

Call: (203) 294-2065, or

E-mail: health@wallingfordct.gov

Wallingford Health Department Website:

<https://www.wallingfordct.gov/government/departments/health-department/>