

WHAT?

Childhood lead poisoning usually occurs when a child eats or inhales dust that contains lead. Lead poisoning is a very serious health problem and occurs more often than you think. Traces of lead can be found in many things, putting many children at risk of exposure.

WHO?

- Children aged 6 months to 6 years are at greatest risk for lead poisoning. Young children put many things in their mouths, and some of these could have lead in or on them.
- Infants are especially at risk, as their developing bodies absorb lead more readily. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavioral problems.
- Pregnant women are also advised to take caution against lead, as it can cause harm to unborn children.



HAVE YOUR CHILD TESTED

- All children **MUST** have a blood lead test at 12 months and again at 24 months or at least once before 6 years of age if they are older than 24 months and have never had a test.
- Children can begin to be screened for lead at 6 months.
- Children should be assessed annually to determine the need for additional testing until age 6.
- Your health care provider or clinic can assess for lead poisoning risk by asking you questions about your home, environment, and child's habits.
- If your child proves to be at risk for lead exposure, a blood test may be needed at other times than the mandatory 12 month and 24 month test.
- Pregnant women should also ask their health care provider if they recommend a lead test since lead exposure can cause premature birth and low weight.

HOW HIGH IS HIGH?

There is no "safe" level of lead in the blood, but your health care provider can let you know if the level is one at which you need to take action. If your child's level is elevated, your child will be asked to continue testing every two or three months to make sure the lead level is decreasing.

REMEMBER, THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP IS TO REMOVE OR REDUCE THE SOURCES OF LEAD AROUND YOUR CHILD.

GET YOUR CHILD TESTED

For more information, contact:

- Your health care provider or clinic
- Your local county health department
- The Oklahoma State Department of Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
1.800.766.2223
405.426.8311
- The National Lead Information Center Hotline
1.800.424.5323



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GET THE LEAD OUT

**HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN
AGAINST LEAD POISONING**

TIPS TO REDUCE RISK OF LEAD POISONING

WASH UP



- Wash children's hands and faces before meals and bedtime and after they play outside.
- Bottle and pacifier tops should be cleaned each time they fall on the ground or floor.
- Wash toys often and remove any toys you suspect might have lead in them.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating them.
- Wash hands and counter tops before preparing food.

SCREENING FOR LEAD

In Oklahoma, all children must receive a blood lead test at 12 months and again at 24 months.

EAT BALANCED MEALS



- Give children three healthy meals and two nutritious snacks each day.
- Give children food high in iron and calcium, such as lean meat, eggs, greens, milk, potatoes, fortified cereals, and fruit.
- Do not store food in open cans, glazed pottery, or leaded crystal containers.

USE COLD WATER



- Older homes may have lead in pipes or plumbing fixtures that can put lead in the water, newer homes may have lead soldered pipes.
- Run cold water from the tap for a few minutes before using it for cooking or drinking.
- Do not use hot water from the tap for cooking, drinking, or preparing infant formula.
- If you are concerned, you may purchase a filter or filter system for drinking water that is rated to remove lead.

CLEANING TIPS

(IF YOU LIVE IN A PRE-1978 HOME)

- Use water with a little soap or detergent to clean up loose paint chips around windows, doors, or woodwork.
- Cover hard to clean surfaces with plastic sheeting or duct tape to keep paint chips contained.
- Wet dust and wet mop often (once a week) to remove any lead dust in the house.
- Use a damp cloth or damp mop with detergent or household cleaner.
- Wash rags separately from other laundry.
- Do not burn old newspapers, bread bags, and comic books or magazines. These are sometimes printed with lead ink.
- Wash work clothes of adults who work with lead separately from clothes of other family members.
- Check lead safe work practices before remodeling or renovating your home.

