

# LEAD FACTS



## Did you know?

1. Lead enters your bloodstream after breathing or swallowing lead dust.
2. Lead is more dangerous for children than adults because children's growing bodies absorb more lead and their nervous system, including the brain, is not fully developed.
3. Children's brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead, such as behavioral and hearing problems, slowed growth, and headaches.
4. Lead dust ingested by pregnant women can harm the unborn child.
5. Many children with lead poisoning have no symptoms and appear healthy.
6. High blood lead in adults can result in difficulties during pregnancy, reproductive problems, high blood pressure, digestive problems, nerve disorders, memory and concentration problems, and muscle and joint pain.

## Why would house dust have lead in it?

1. Homes built before 1978 may have lead in the paint. A room might be painted over with safe paint, and if maintained, may not be a hazard. Deteriorating surfaces with lead-based paint, such as peeling, chipping, or cracking, should be repaired immediately by an EPA-certified contractor. In addition, areas used a lot, such as windows, doors, stairs, railings, handrails, and porches should be maintained to prevent the original lead-based paint from flaking off and creating dust.
2. Clothing worn for work in mining, auto mechanics, and construction industries, or activities outside the home where exposure to lead may occur, may bring contamination into the house. Before coming home, shower, change clothes, and launder clothing separate from the rest of the family's clothing.

## How to keep a lead-free home

1. **WASH your hand often!** Parents and children should wash their hands before eating and sleeping.
2. When possible, use a vacuum with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter to prevent the redistribution of dust into the home.

3. Wet mop and damp dust weekly.
4. Clean mops and cloths after each use.
5. Remove shoes and dirty clothing before entering your home.
6. Clean closets or storage areas often.
7. Clean play areas, toys, and the toy containers. If toys come from outside, clean them before bringing them inside.
8. If your old paint is peeling or disturbed, test the paint to determine if it contains lead. Lead test kits are available in hardware stores. If the paint contains, lead, have an EPA-certified contractor repair it, and keep children away from these areas.

### **Can lead be found in my drinking water?**

1. Lead can enter your drinking water when service pipes that contain lead corrode. The most common problem is brass or chrome-plated brass faucets and fixtures with lead solder.
2. If your home was built before 1986, it is more likely to have lead pipes, fixtures, and solder.
3. The only way to know if lead is present in water is to test it. Contact the Idaho Environmental Health Program at 1-800-445-8647 or [bceh@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:bceh@dhw.idaho.gov) or a local analytical lab for more information about how to test drinking water.



### **How can I reduce lead in my drinking water?**

1. Let your faucet run for a few minutes before drinking to flush out any lead that has accumulated from sitting in the pipes.
2. Only use cold water for eating and drinking. Hot water is more likely to contain lead. Flushing your faucet and letting the water get as cold as possible is best.
3. Use water filters. **Boiling or treating your water will not remove lead.**

### **How do I reduce or prevent lead exposure from my soil?**

1. The soil in yards or playgrounds can contain lead from several sources, including when exterior lead-based paint flakes or peels onto the ground. Maintain paint in good condition to prevent chipping, flaking, and contamination of lead into the soil.
2. Previous uses of leaded gasoline in cars or industrial sources, such as former lead smelters or mines, can be sources of soil contamination.

3. Remove shoes before entering your home to prevent contaminated soil from entering your home.
4. Plant shrubs and use other barriers (such as mulch or wood chips) to prevent children from playing in the soil near the home.

## **How can I make sure my child does not have elevated blood lead levels?**

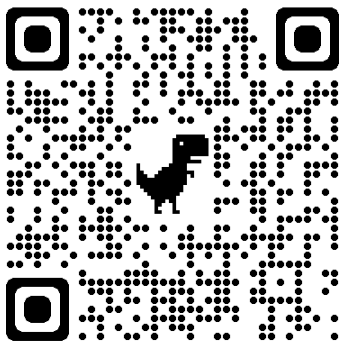
1. Lead exposure often occurs with no obvious symptoms and can go unrecognized. Testing is the only way to know if your child has been exposed.
2. If you have never had your child tested or think your child has been exposed, contact your primary health care provider to arrange a test.
3. Follow up! If your child has an elevated blood lead level, work with your medical provider for information on how to lower your child's lead level. Follow up testing should be scheduled until the lead levels drop to acceptable levels.

## **How to remodel correctly**

1. If your home was built before 1978 or if you have known lead-based paint, a lead-safe EPA-certified contractor must be hired when conducting any work, including repairs and remodels. For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program](http://www.epa.gov/lead/lead-renovation-repair-and-painting-program).

## **For additional information contact:**

1. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare  
Environmental Health Program  
[Healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/environmental-health](http://Healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/environmental-health)  
800-445-8647  
[bceh@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:bceh@dhw.idaho.gov)



2. CDC  
[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm)



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**HEALTH & WELFARE**  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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