



Home Safety - Lead Poisoning

What is the Problem?

Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust are the main sources of exposure for lead in U.S. children.¹ Lead-based paints were banned for use in housing in 1978, however all houses built before 1978 are likely to still contain some lead-based paint.² Approximately 24 million housing units have deteriorated lead paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust, which are both known to cause numerous health problems.^{3,4} Furthermore, childhood lead poisoning, injuries, respiratory diseases such as asthma, and quality of life issues have been linked to the more than six million substandard housing units nationwide.⁵



Who is at Risk?

All children under the age of six years old are at risk because they tend to put their hands, and/or other objects, that may be contaminated with lead dust, into their mouths.⁶ Children living at or below the poverty line who live in older housing are at the greatest risk.⁷

Prevention Tips

Lead poisoning is a preventable public health problem. Keep your family safe by following these safety tips:

- Talk to your local/state health department to test your home for lead, at no cost.⁸
- Make sure children do not have access to peeling paint or chewable surfaces with lead-based paint.⁹
- Create barriers between living/play areas for children and lead sources.¹⁰
- Regularly wash children's hands and toys.¹¹
- Prevent children from playing in bare soil if possible; provide sandboxes if necessary.¹²
- Avoid using traditional home remedies and cosmetics that contain lead.¹³
- Check lead recall lists and remove toys and/or jewelry that could be dangerous¹⁴ (toys may be manufactured outside the US and not held to the same lead standards as the United States).



Plan of the Week (POW):

The goal is to prevent lead exposure to children **BEFORE** they are harmed.¹⁵ Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead; the key is stopping children from coming into contact with lead.¹⁶ Lead hazards in a child's environment must be identified and controlled or removed safely.¹⁷ **ALWAYS** be aware of toy and cosmetic ingredients, maintain good hand washing habits, and create barriers between children and surfaces that may contain lead or lead dust.¹⁸ No population group is immune to illness or injury occurring in houses. Everyone can take actions to protect themselves and their families from health hazards inside their homes.¹⁹

References

- 1-4, 6-18 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Lead: Prevention Tips.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm> Updated 12 September 2012. Accessed 5 September 2013.
- 5, 19 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Healthy Homes.
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/newhealthyhomes.htm> Updated 12 September 2012. Accessed 28 August 2013.

NMCPHC Injury Prevention and Violence Free Living Webpage

<http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/injury-violence-free-living/Pages/injury-violence-free-living.aspx>

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