



Get the Lead Out
Facts About

Housekeeping Tips to Reduce Lead Exposure

Certain housekeeping methods can reduce the amount of lead dust in your home. Using good cleaning methods frequently can help reduce the exposure to lead in dust in your home and help prevent lead poisoning. Contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-3517 for information on repairing or renovating your home or for a list of licensed lead inspectors and contractors.

Cleaning Supplies

- Latex or rubber gloves
- Paper towels or disposable rags
- All-purpose detergent OR cleaning detergent made for removing lead dust (can be found in most hardware or home improvement stores)
- Heavy-duty plastic garbage bag(s) or 6 mil poly bag(s)
- One-gallon bucket
- Sponge
- Mop
- Water
- Contact paper or duct tape

Before Starting

1. Do not allow children, pets or pregnant women into the area until cleaning is complete.
2. Do not eat, drink, chew gum or tobacco, or smoke during the cleaning process.
3. Wear latex gloves and clothing that can be easily washed. Be sure to wash hands after cleaning.

Cleaning Methods

Before cleaning, repair all areas that display flaking or peeling paint.

1. Maintain a frequent cleaning schedule to control dust levels which should include:
 - Clean eating surfaces and counter tops after each meal and snack
 - Pick up all clothing, towels, toys and trash to make cleaning activities easier
 - Vacuum all carpeted areas and furniture
 - Wet-wipe hard surface floors and all flat surfaces such as window sills and tabletops where dusts collect
 - Wash toys and security blanket often to remove any lead dust
 - Place a rug at all doorways entering the house so family members and guests can wipe their feet before entering the home
 - Wash doorway entry rugs often
2. Be sure to change rags and mop heads frequently, so lead dust is removed and not just smeared around at next cleaning. If rags and mop heads are to be washed and reused, run one cycle of clear water through the washing machine before doing other laundry.

Proper Disposal of Cleaning Supplies

1. Keep cleaning materials and garbage out of reach of children and pets.
2. Pour dirty water into the toilet instead of the sink, so the lead does not contact food preparation areas.

Other Housekeeping Tips

1. Wet-wash hard surfaces and vacuum floors weekly to control dust levels.
2. To prevent tracking lead dust into the home, remove shoes when coming indoors or place mats or rugs at the door to wipe shoes.
3. Install contact paper over painted shelves where food is stored and over chipping paint. Be sure to check the condition of the contact paper. Replace it as it gets old and does not stick well to the surface. Heavy tape, such as duct tape or electrical tape, can be placed on window sills, stair rails and table edges as a temporary barrier to prevent children from being exposed to chipping paint or lead dust.
4. Consider sealing surfaces, so cleaning is easier. For example, tile, vinyl and wooden floors should be properly maintained.
5. Consider replacing the carpet, since it is hard to thoroughly clean. Please contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-3517 for instructions on safely removing carpet containing lead dust.
6. Wet-wipe other flat surfaces weekly where dust collects – for example, television screens, table tops, crib rails, stair steps and doorknobs.
7. Be sure to clean areas frequently that rub against a leaded surface. These areas include doors and windows. Pay special attention to the window trough, the inner part between the window sill and the storm window.
8. Remove or replace mini-blinds unless you are sure they do not contain any lead.
9. Wash mini-blinds every three to six months.
10. If someone in the household works with lead, be sure he or she removes work clothes carefully. Launder these clothes separately. Also, make sure the person showers and washes his/her hair as soon as possible after work. If possible, use shower facilities at work, so lead dust is not carried into your vehicle and into your home.
11. Peeling and chipping paint may be caused by leaks or other water damage. Locate and repair water sources.

For more information on lead poisoning, please contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-3517, 866-909-3572, or TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466; or call your local health department.