



Get the Lead Out
Facts About

Sources of Childhood Lead Poisoning

Exposure to lead can cause a child to have learning disabilities, problems with paying attention and behavioral problems.

Young children, through oral behaviors and hand contamination, are commonly exposed to lead by ingestion. Children ages 2 years and younger are the highest priority for assessment and testing.

The most common sources are -

- Lead contaminated dust that adheres to hands, toys, food or other objects young children put in their mouth
 - Scraping of exterior lead-paint surfaces in the past may cause lead contamination of the soil. Lead in soil does not deteriorate or wash away, but is a permanent hazard.
 - Leaded gasoline used in the past may have contaminated soil. Lead can be tracked in on shoes or by pets and can contaminate hands during play or gardening.
- Ingestion of paint chips from homes built before 1978 that may contain lead paint
 - Children are commonly exposed at windows and porches where there is deteriorating lead paint. Children eating lead-paint chips can ingest a large amount of lead very quickly.
 - The risk of having lead in paint in homes built before 1978 is:
 - Pre-1940: 68 percent
 - 1940 – 1959: 43 percent
 - 1960 – 1978: 8 percent

Other sources of possible exposure risk are -

- Eating foods from cans with lead seams imported from outside the United States
- Eating foods from imported or antique glazed pottery which may contain lead in the glaze
- Drinking water from plumbing that contains lead pipes, lead solder or a holding tank containing lead
- Chewing on toys, keys, keychains, necklaces and toy jewelry that can contain small amounts of lead
- Consuming foods or medicines, especially home remedies, imported from other countries
 - Lozeena - food coloring from Iraq
 - Ayurvedic – herbal medicine product from India
 - Surma or kohl - cosmetic applied to eyelids in Asian countries
 - Azarcon or greta - treatment for intestinal blockage (90 percent lead) from Mexico
 - Sindoor – powdered red lead used during Hindu marriage ceremony
- Middle Eastern folk remedies:
 - Farouk for teething
 - Bint al zahab for colic
 - Sindoor

- Asian folk remedies:
 - Ghasard - brown powder to aid digestion
 - Kandu - red powder used to treat stomach aches
 - Paylooah - fever and rash treatment in Southeast Asia
 - Bali-Goli - a round, flat black bean that is dissolved in "grip water" and used for stomach aches
 - Hai Ge Fen - clamshell powder, sometimes brewed in tea
 - Xyoo Fa - used as a medicine
 - Lithare - ingredient in Asian patent medicine that contains lead oxide
 - Minium - ingredient in Asian patent medicine that contains lead oxide
- Foods that may contain lead:
 - Moonshine
 - Mexican tamarind candy
- Family members who have the following hobbies:
 - Stained glass
 - Pottery making
 - Target shooting
 - Refinishing furniture with finishes containing lead
 - Casting ammunition
- Family members with the following occupations who participate in the following activities:
 - Hazardous waste
 - Radiator repair
 - Lead industry
 - Smelting
 - Battery manufacturer or repair
 - Welding
 - Construction, renovation, home repair and/or house painting
 - Brass or copper foundry
 - Glass manufacturing
 - Going to a firing range
 - Valve and pipefitting
 - Chemical preparation
 - Operating industrial machinery or equipment
 - Automotive repair
 - Bridge, tunnel and elevated highway construction
- Consuming or handling any of the following products:
 - Vinyl mini-blinds imported before 1997
 - Curtain weights
 - Window weights (in older windows)
 - Candles made outside the United States containing lead in wicks
 - Lead sinkers used for fishing
 - Toy soldiers and other pewter figurines containing lead
 - Imported metallic jewelry or some metallic toys placed in gum ball machines

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.