



*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.