

Lead Fact Sheet

Mississippi Department of Health

What is lead?

Lead is found in:

- Tap water (especially well water)
- Keys/Key chains
- Brass faucets
- Toy jewelry
- Zipper pulls and snap closures
- Pottery/ceramic ware
- Porcelain tubs and sinks
- Electrical cords
- Paint on toys
- Imported/vinyl/plastic mini-blinds bought before 1997
- Lead-based paint
- Soil and dust
- Batteries
- Imported canned foods

Protect your child from lead:

- Clean your child's hands with soap and water or baby wipes after they play outside, and before meals.
- Keep your child from eating paint chips, dust or dirt. Keep children from touching window troughs (wells) in old homes and outside surfaces (steps and porch floors) near old homes. Use a wet mop or wet cloth with an all-purpose cleaner to clear areas of dust or paint chips on window sills, interior floors, porch floors, ledges and outside steps. Keep children's hands and toys off these areas. Window sills that are not very smooth might be hard to clean and can be covered with contact paper or plastic. Surfaces that children touch often should be smooth and easily cleaned. Keep children from eating while sitting on floors or steps.
- Anyone in the household, who works with lead, should avoid wearing work shoes while walking on steps and floors where children put their hands and should avoid wearing work clothes while sitting on furniture or car seats where children put their hands.
- Wash your child's toys often.
- Give your child a diet rich in vitamin C, calcium and iron. Some good sources are milk, oranges, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables, eggs, bread, cereal and meat. Since children absorb more lead on an empty stomach give your child something to eat every 2-3 hours.
- Have your home checked for lead before you remodel. Do not scrape or sand lead-based paint.

Signs or symptoms of possible lead poisoning

Most children do not have any obvious signs or abnormal symptoms. Signs of damage sometimes show later. Some signs and symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Frequent tiredness
- Behavioral problems
- Stunted growth
- Learning problems
- Hyperactivity
- Decreased appetite
- Developmental delay
- Hearing loss

Convulsions, coma, and death can occur at very high lead levels, which are extremely rare.

Is your child at risk for lead poisoning?

- Does your child live in, or regularly visit, an old house built before 1960?
Was your child's day-care center/pre-school/baby-sitter's home built before 1960?
Does the house have peeling or chipping paint?
- Does your child live in a house built before 1960 with recent, ongoing, or planned renovation or remodeling?
- Has any siblings or playmate of your child had lead poisoning?
- Does your child frequently come in contact with an adult who works with lead? Examples of job descriptions or locations include: construction and painting of buildings and houses; pottery and painting; car and truck radiator repairs, auto body work; the manufacture or working with cable, wire and tire weights; working at a recycling center; welding and soldering; target shooting and handling of firearms, bullets or explosives; electronic repair; furniture refinishing; construction and repair of ships, bridges, and water towers; working on oil rigs; working with rubber or plastics; or working with lead Babbitt.
- Do you give your child any home or folk remedies or Mexican candy which might contain lead?
- Does your child live near a heavily traveled highway or street?
- Does your child play with keys? They may contain lead.
- Are there lead fishing sinkers in your home?
- Have items other than vegetation been burned outside near the home? The ashes left behind often contain lead.

If you answered "yes" to any of the questions above, please discuss the possibility of lead poisoning with your child's physician or a nurse at your local health department.

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