

Why clean lead safe?

Lead found in paint and older items in your home crumbles over time into invisible dust. Lead dust clings to hands, toys, and objects that children put in their mouths, putting them at risk for lead poisoning. You can help prevent lead poisoning by following lead-safe cleaning practices to keep your home free of lead dust.

Lead is a highly toxic metal. Too much lead in the body can cause serious and permanent health problems for anyone, but children and pregnant women are at special risk. Lead poisoning in pregnant women can increase the risk of miscarriage and cause babies to be born too small or too early.

The Health Department recommends testing all children at ages 1 and 2. Talk to your health care provider about testing.

What is a HEPA vacuum?

Always use a vacuum with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter. A HEPA filter can remove very fine particles from air at 99.97% efficiency. Regular household vacuums release small particles of lead into the air, which spreads lead dust around rather than removing it.

You can buy HEPA vacuums at most local stores that carry home appliances.

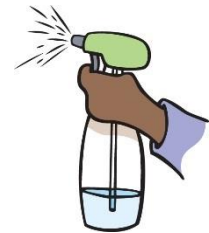
How to Clean

Be sure to clean in and around windows, baseboards, doors, stairways and floors. Keep children and pregnant women out of the area while you clean.

1. Wear gloves.



2. Use a spray bottle to help reduce dust. Wash surfaces with all-purpose cleaner and scrub well.



3. Use a new paper towel to clean each area. Do not use a cloth or sponge, which will only spread dust.



4. Put paper towels and any paint chips in a plastic bag. Close the bag tightly and throw it out with the trash.



5. Wash your hands after cleaning.



Cleaning Hard Surface Floors

Avoid sweeping, which moves lead dust around. HEPA vacuum the floor before washing it.

1. Use a three-bucket mopping system.
 - Fill one bucket with a cleaning solution.
 - Fill the second bucket with rinse water.
 - Leave the third bucket empty.

Or use a three-chamber bucket: one chamber for cleaning solution, one for rinse water and one empty.

2. Put a mop into the bucket of cleaning solution, then wring out excess into empty bucket. Mop a small section of the floor and rinse the mop in the rinse bucket. Wring out excess into empty bucket.
3. Repeat until entire floor is clean. Dump mop water down the toilet.
4. Finally, rinse the floor one more time with clean water and a clean mop.
5. You can also use a wet mop with disposable pads (e.g. Swiffer) and replace them frequently.
6. For smaller areas, use a spray bottle filled with cleaning solution and wipe the floor with paper towels. Throw the towels away in a plastic bag and close the bag tightly.

Cleaning Carpets

1. HEPA-vacuum carpet using the corner tool in corners, cracks of trim and edges of carpet.
2. Vacuum carpets very slowly. Allow the vacuum time to bring dust from the deepest parts of the carpet.
3. Vacuum the room in one direction for the first pass. For a second pass, vacuum across the first pass.

For more information, call the Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (802) 863-7220 or (800) 439-8550 (toll-free in Vermont) or visit healthvermont.gov.

