

Lead poisoning is a serious but preventable health problem. Lead is a highly toxic metal that has been commonly used in many products—such as paint, solder, batteries, brass, car radiators and pottery. Too much lead in the body, or lead poisoning, can cause serious and permanent health problems. Lead can hurt the brain, kidneys and nervous system. There is **no** safe level of lead in the body.

Lead is most dangerous to young children who can come in contact with lead in a number of ways.

Lead Paint

Dust from lead paint is the major source of lead poisoning. In 1978, lead was banned from house paint. Most homes built before that time are likely to contain lead. Children can be exposed to lead during renovation projects or from chipping, peeling or cracked paint. Lead dust can be breathed in or swallowed.



Lead in Soil and Drinking Water

Soil may contain lead from lead paint that flakes off the outside of buildings and from exhaust when there was leaded gasoline. Lead can get into drinking water as it moves through older lead pipes, plumbing fixtures or solder.

Other Sources of Lead

Children can get lead poisoning from other sources that may contain lead.

- **Lead in workplaces or on parent's clothes:** construction and renovation work, auto repair and work with batteries, plumbing, welding and soldering.
- **Lead in pots and dishes:** glazed pottery and metal pots with lead solder.
- **Lead in antiques, vintage and salvaged goods:** older furniture, building materials and other items, even if they look bare.
- **Lead in products:** toys and jewelry made in other countries, imported candy (especially from Mexico), imported cans of food, spices and spice mixtures (especially if they come directly from other countries), metal keys, imported make-up and home remedies.
- **Lead in crafts and sports:** stained glass, bullets, fishing sinkers and artist's paints.



Prevent Lead Poisoning

Prevent lead poisoning in children by maintaining your home in good condition, cleaning in a lead-safe way, and eating healthy foods.

- Wash children's hands before eating and sleeping, and wash toys often to remove invisible lead dust.
- Serve snacks and meals to children at the table or in their high chairs.
- Repair chipped, peeling or cracked paint. Keep children from these areas until fixed.
- Wet mop floors, and wet clean surfaces with disposable towels, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter and vacuum slowly.
- Use lead-safe practices during renovations, such as wet sanding and wet scraping, and do not use a belt sander or heat gun.
- Plant food gardens in lead-free soil that is at least three feet away from buildings and busy roads.
- Leave shoes at the door to prevent tracking soil that may contain lead into the house.
- Test your water. Find a lab and order a Lead in Drinking Water Test Kit at tinyurl.com/certified-lab.



For more information about lead hazards and lead poisoning, call 800-439-8550 or visit healthvermont.gov/lead.