

Lead Poisoning Prevention: How to Keep Your Family Safe



Lead and your Body

Lead is a metal that is poisonous.

If lead enters your body and gets in your blood, it can:

- Cause problems with growth.
- Make it harder for you to learn things.
- Affect your ability to hear.

Lead can also hurt your brain, kidneys and many other parts of your body.

You cannot tell if someone has lead poisoning by just looking at them.

The only way to know is by getting tested.



Ask your doctor about testing your child's blood for lead.



Where do you find lead?

Lead may be found in:

- Chipped or peeling paint in old houses.
- Dust from construction sites.
- Soil outside houses or buildings.
- Some candies from other countries (made from tamarind fruit or stored in small clay pots).
- Homemade medicines that are white or bright colored powders.
- Toys and furniture painted with lead paint.
- Drinking water from old plumbing fixtures.
- Handcrafted aluminum cookware made in other countries.
- Lead-glazed antique or handmade pottery or cookware.

Children can get lead in their bodies when they:



- Eat things with lead in them.
- Put dirty hands or toys in their mouths.
- Breathe in dust with lead in it.



How do I keep my family safe?

- Keep hands and faces clean. Wash before eating and after playing.
- Keep your home clean. Clean up any paint chips you find around your house.
- Keep your child's toys clean and free of dust.
- Wash pacifier or bottle when it falls on the floor.
- If you work with products that have lead in them, shower and change clothes before you come home.
- Do not store food in pottery containers.

Many of the foods you get from WIC can help protect you and your children from lead. All WIC cereals are iron-fortified. All WIC juices have vitamin C. Also, you can use your WIC card to buy dark leafy green vegetables, oranges, grapefruits, tomatoes and other fruits and vegetables.

Can my diet help?

Eating four to six small meals during the day can help protect you against lead poisoning. Also, some specific foods can help protect you from lead.

Iron

If your iron level is normal, it will help protect your body from lead. To build up your iron level, eat more of these foods:

- Lean red meats, fish and chicken.
- Iron-fortified cereals.
- Legumes (beans, peas, lentils).
- Dried fruits.



Calcium

Eating calcium blocks lead from going into your blood and it also helps build strong bones and teeth. To build up your calcium level, eat more of these foods:

- Milk.
- Yogurt.
- Cheese.
- Dark green leafy vegetables.



Vitamin C

Vitamin C works with iron in your body to stop lead from getting into your blood. To build up your vitamin C level, eat more of these foods:

- Oranges and grapefruits.
- Orange juice.
- Tomatoes and tomato juice.
- Red and green bell peppers.

