



## Avoiding Lead Exposure



### Overview

Lead is a highly toxic metal. It can be found in things like paint, dust, water and soil. Lead can build up in your body and cause a condition we call "lead poisoning." This is especially dangerous for children. Here are some ways you can protect yourself and your family from lead exposure.

### Lead-based paint

First, if your home was built before 1978, have it tested for lead-based paint. This paint was commonly used in older homes. As it ages, it cracks and peels, releasing lead dust. You breathe in this dust. It gets on surfaces that you touch. It gets on a child's toys and hands, and they may swallow it. If your house has lead paint, have it treated or removed. Until that's done, keep children away from chipped or peeling paint. Cover it with duct tape or contact paper. Use a wet paper towel or wet mop to remove dust from surfaces regularly. Wash toys and hands often.

### Water and soil

It's smart to have your water and soil tested for lead, too. Lead can get into your water when older pipes and fittings corrode. It can be in your soil if you live near a highway. That's because gasoline used to have lead in it, and exhaust fumes could have left it in your soil. The only way to know for sure is to have it tested.

### Test your children

If you're concerned that your family has been exposed to lead, take action. A doctor can do a blood test for lead poisoning, so have your children tested. For more information about lead, talk to your doctor.