

Keeping kids safe from lead exposure

Lead is no longer in gasoline or paint, but it lingers all around us. Unfortunately, lead is dangerous for children.

The biggest source of lead for children is paint in old homes. Small children may eat paint chips and inhale paint dust. They can also touch surfaces and put their hands in their mouths. You can reduce their risks around your home.



Photo above by Jomkwan, below by Bymuratdeniz, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on lead prevention:

1 Make time to clean. Peeling and cracking paint creates lead dust that must be cleaned with a wet or damp cloth, sponge or mop. Use wet paper towels to clean up lead dust around windows and play areas regularly.



2 Wash your kids' hands and toys often with soap and water, especially before they eat and sleep.

3 Test your home. If your home was built before 1978, talk with your local health department about how to get your home tested for lead. Don't remodel or renovate your home until it has been professionally inspected for lead.



4 Eat healthy. Eating a low-fat diet and a variety of foods that are high in calcium, iron and vitamin C can help your child absorb less lead.

4 Have your child tested. If you suspect your child may have been exposed to lead, have them tested by a doctor. They may not have visible symptoms. But lead can harm their developing nervous system.

>> For more lead safety tips, visit www.epa.gov/lead