

# Lead Poisoning



## What is lead?

Lead is a metal that is still found in many things that we come into contact with. Lead can have a significant negative impact on our children.

## What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning happens when too much lead gets into the body. It can enter through the skin, or when a child breathes it in or swallows something contaminated by lead. It can be found in the paint of old houses, dirt and dust near freeways, and some toys, jewelry, pots and candies. Even small amounts of lead in your child's body can cause serious health, developmental, and behavioral problems. A simple blood test can detect lead in your child.

## Who is at highest risk?

- Children who are able to crawl and until they are six years old. Children under six years are more likely to come into contact with lead dust due to their hand-to-mouth behavior.
- Live in or visit homes built before 1978 that still have old paint and pipes.

## How can you prevent lead poisoning?

- If you live in an older home, keep all surfaces clean.
- Make sure your child avoids peeling paint.
- Wash your child's hands after playing outside and before meals.
- Wash your child's toys often.
- Serve healthy meals.



## What are the symptoms of lead poisoning?

- Lead exposure in children is usually hard to see. Most children have no obvious immediate symptoms.
- Slowed growth
- Learning issues
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite
- Stomach pain and cramps
- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation or loose stool

## When should your child be tested for lead poisoning?

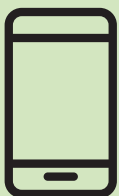
- **Before 12 and 24 months** of age.
- Talk to your provider about testing your child if your child is **under 6 years** of age and has not received a test.

## Children who eat a healthy diet absorb less lead. Be sure the meals you serve include:

- Iron-rich foods, like lean red meat, fish, chicken, cooked beans and dried fruits.
- Calcium-rich foods like milk, yogurt, cheese and green leafy vegetables.
- Vitamin C-rich foods, like oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, bell peppers and broccoli.



## Keep your appointments with your child's provider and ask for a blood lead test today! Lead poisoning is easier to treat when it is found early.



### Do you have questions?

Call our 24-hour Nurse Advice Line. We are here to help you.

English: **(888) 275-8750**

Español: **(866) 648-3537**

TTY/TDD: **711**

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