

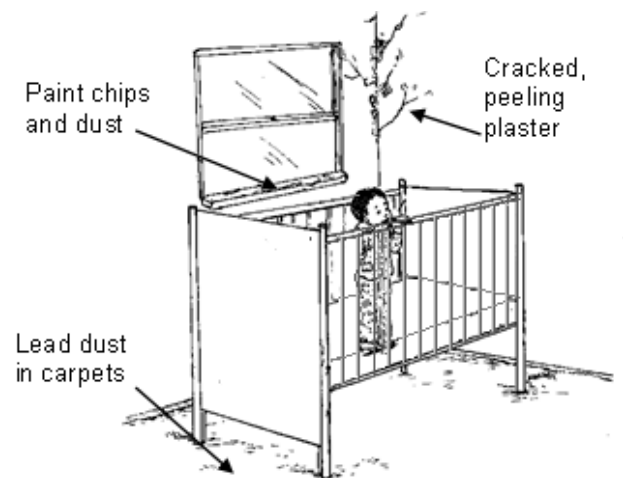


## Lead Poisoning Prevention

Lead poisoning is the harmful buildup of lead in the body. **Even tiny amounts can be very harmful to a young child's developing nervous system.** Children under 6 years old are at highest risk for lead poisoning. This is because the young brain is growing rapidly and because they put non-food objects and their fingers in their mouths. If lead dust gets on their fingers, children can swallow the lead.

Children who live in older homes, where lead paint has been used, are at highest risk. Even if non-lead paint has been applied over leaded paint, chipped plaster or paint can be sources of lead (Picture 1). There are many other sources of lead. A few of them are listed here:

- Soil and dust
- Lead crystal glassware, lead-glazed pottery
- Some children's toys and jewelry (see **Lead in Toys** on page 2)
- Burning, sanding or heat-stripping painted wood
- Folk remedies and cosmetics - kohl (surma), greta, azarcon
- Some imported foods and candies
- Lead in plumbing



**Picture 1** Sources of lead in the home.

### Why Lead Poisoning Is Dangerous

Lead poisoning can cause brain damage in children. Lowered IQs, attention deficit problems and behavior problems can result from lead poisoning. Sometimes the brain damage cannot be reversed even with treatment.

### Is Your Child at Risk?

Does your child:

- Live in or often visit a house built before 1978? This includes a daycare center, preschool or home of a baby sitter or relative.
- Live in or visit a house that has peeling, chipping, dusting or chalking paint?

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## Is Your Child at Risk? continued

- Have a brother, sister or playmate that has had lead poisoning?
- Have frequent contact with an adult whose hobby or work involves lead? Examples are construction, welding, pottery, painting and casting ammunition.

If your child is younger than 6 years and you answer "yes" or "unknown" to any of these questions, he or she is at risk for lead poisoning. A doctor should order a blood lead test if you are concerned your child has been exposed to lead. A doctor is required to provide a blood lead test if your child is on Medicaid, if you live in a high risk zip code or if you answered "yes" or "unknown" to any of the questions listed above.

## Lead in Toys

If you think your child has been exposed to a toy that contains lead, remove the toy immediately.

- Only a certified laboratory can accurately test a toy for lead. Home testing kits may not be reliable for finding low levels of lead.
- To check for a list of toy recalls go to <http://www.cpsc.gov/> or call 1-800-638-2772.

## Signs of Lead Poisoning

Most children with lead poisoning do not have symptoms. A blood lead test is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning. Your health care provider can help you decide if this test is needed. When symptoms do occur, they include:

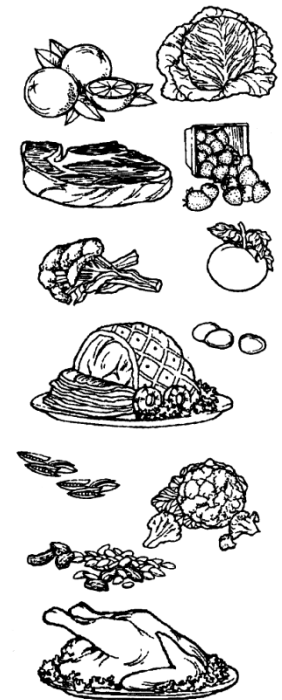
- headache
- stomachache or cramps
- weight loss
- constipation or diarrhea
- fussiness or crankiness and trouble sleeping.

### Signs of severe lead poisoning include:

- vomiting
- dizziness
- seizures
- joint pain
- acting listless (no energy)

## How to Prevent Lead Poisoning

- Serve foods high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C (Picture 2). Usually children with lead poisoning do not have enough calcium or iron in their bodies.
- Prepare a healthy diet with fruits and vegetables. Limit fat and sugar.



**Picture 2** Serve foods that are high in calcium, iron and vitamin C.

## **How to Prevent Lead Poisoning, continued**

- Teach your child to practice good hand washing before meals and after playing outdoors. Do not let children play in bare soil.
- Use an all-purpose cleaning solution to damp-mop dusty areas. Keep your house as dust-free as possible. Contact your local health department to see if a HEPA vacuum is available for loan.
- Ask your health department for information about lead clean-up or removal. Sometimes leaded areas should be covered with new latex paint, or with wallpaper or wallboard.
- Avoid using home remedies and cosmetics that may contain lead.
- Use only cold water from the tap for drinking, cooking and making baby formula, as hot water is more likely to contain higher levels of lead.
- Shower and change clothes after finishing a task that involves working with lead-based products or after visiting a firing range.
- Never allow small children or pregnant women in the area when remodeling older homes.
- Do not store food in lead-glazed pottery. Imported pottery is more likely to be lead-glazed. Do not let children drink from lead crystal baby bottles or glassware.
- Replace vinyl or plastic mini-blinds made outside of the United States. If that is not possible, wash them weekly to keep lead dust away.
- Always leave your shoes at the door when entering your home.

## **Follow-Up Care**

All children at risk for lead poisoning should receive a blood lead test at age 1 and 2 years or up to 6 years of age if a child has never been tested. If your child has lead poisoning or is at increased risk for lead poisoning, he or she may need to have a blood lead test more often.

You can request more information about lead poisoning from the Ohio Department of Health at (877) 532-3723, or your local health department.

Ohio Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention–Children Website:  
[http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/lead\\_ch/leadch1.aspx](http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/lead_ch/leadch1.aspx)