



# Fight **Lead Poisoning** with a Healthy Diet

Lead Poisoning Prevention Tips  
for Families



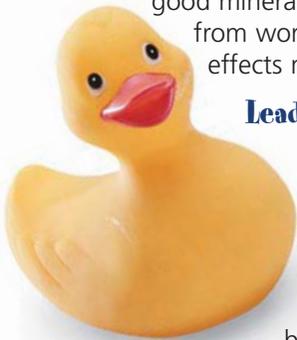
## Lead and a Healthy Diet

What You Can Do to Protect Your Child

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### Lead's Effects on the Body

Lead is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems, and can harm your child's brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead in the body stops good minerals such as iron and calcium from working right. Some of these effects may be permanent.



### Lead Awareness and Your Child

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood test.

Ask your doctor or health care provider to test your child under six years of age at least once a year.

## Lead Hazards

Where is Lead Found?

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### Main Sources of Lead

**Lead-based paint** is a hazard if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. Even lead-based paint that appears to be undisturbed can be a problem if it is on surfaces that children chew or that get a lot of wear and tear. The older your home is, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

**Contaminated dust** forms when lead paint is dry-scraped or sanded. Dust can also become contaminated when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can gather on surfaces and objects that people touch or that children put into their mouths.

Lead poisoning occurs

**without** any

**obvious symptoms**

and

**harms**



your child's body.

**Contaminated soil** occurs when exterior lead-based paint from houses, buildings, or other structures flakes or peels and gets into the soil. Soil near roadways may also be contaminated from past use of leaded gasoline in cars. Avoid these areas when planting vegetable gardens.

### Other Sources of Lead

Contaminated drinking water from older plumbing fixtures

Lead-based painted toys and household furniture

Imported lead-glazed pottery and leaded crystal

Lead smelters

Hobbies

Folk remedies like azarcon and pay-loo-ah

Cosmetics like kohl and kajal

Do not store **food**  
in **glazed pottery**  
from **foreign countries.**



## **Regularly Eat Healthy Foods**

Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs.

Provide your child with four to six small meals during the day. The following nutrients can help protect your child from lead poisoning:



### **Iron-Rich Foods**

Normal levels of iron work to protect the body from the harmful effects of lead. Good sources of dietary iron include:

*Lean red meats, fish, and chicken*  
*Iron-fortified cereals*  
*Dried fruits (raisins, prunes)*

### **Calcium-Rich Foods**

Calcium reduces lead absorption and also helps make teeth and bones strong. Good sources of dietary calcium include:

*Milk*  
*Yogurt*  
*Cheese*  
*Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, collard greens)*



### **Vitamin C-Rich Foods**

Vitamin C and iron-rich foods work together to reduce lead absorption. Good sources of vitamin C include:

*Oranges, orange juice*  
*Grapefruits, grapefruit juice*  
*Tomatoes, tomato juice*  
*Green peppers*

A healthy diet can help

**protect**  
your **child**  
**from the harmful effects**  
**of lead.**



# Simple Steps You Can Take

to Protect Your Family from Lead Hazards

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## If you think your home has high levels of lead:

- Make sure your children eat healthy, low-fat foods high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Get your children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy.
- Get your home tested for lead if it was built before 1978. Call **1-800-424-LEAD** for more information.
- Always wash your hands before eating.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys.
- Do not use imported pottery to store or serve food.
- Let tap water run for one minute before using.
- Use only cold water for making your baby's formula, drinking, and cooking.
- Regularly clean floors, windowsills, and other surfaces using wet methods that control dust.
- Wipe or remove shoes before entering your house.
- If you rent, it is your landlord's job to keep paint in good shape. Report peeling or chipping paint to your landlord and call your health department if the paint is not repaired safely.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating.
- Don't try to remove paint yourself!



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## For more information on childhood lead poisoning prevention:

### Call

- Your child's pediatrician
- The National Lead Information Center  
**1-800-424-LEAD (424-5323)**
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline  
**1-800-426-4791**



### Visit

- EPA Lead Program Web site  
**[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)**
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site  
**[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead)**
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Web site  
**[www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead)**

