

Lead Poisoning

What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning happens when lead builds up in your body over a period of months or years. Lead is a metal that's found in nature, deep within the ground. It exists all around us too. It's in the air, soil, water and even in our homes.

Even small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems. Children under 6 are at greater risk for lead poisoning than adults. This is because their bodies are still developing and growing, and young children tend to put their hands or objects into their mouths.

Lead can be found in:

- Lead-based paint
- Water pipes (older homes)
- Household dust
- Soil
- Paint sets and art supplies (check the label for ingredients)

What are the symptoms of lead poisoning?

- Headaches
- Muscle and joint weakness
- Behavioral problems
- Trouble concentrating
- A metallic taste in the mouth
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Nausea and vomiting

How can I prevent lead poisoning?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says the best way to prevent lead poisoning is to remove lead hazards from your environment. If you are pregnant, you should do all you can to avoid lead exposure. It can cause damage to an unborn child's brain, kidneys and nervous system.

Here are some ways you can help remove lead hazards from your home:

- Remove shoes when entering the house
- Wash children's hands and toys and change their clothes after outside play
- Avoid planting gardens close to old structures or roads

Routine lead screening

The CDC recommends a blood lead screening test for all children at 12 and 24 months of age. Children who have not been previously screened should be tested at 24 and 72 months.

When children are exposed to lead, their blood lead levels tend to increase from birth-2 years old, and peak around 18-24 months. That's why screening is recommended at 12 and 24 months. This helps identify children who may need medical management.

Children identified with elevated blood levels should be seen by their primary care provider (PCP) and may need to be referred for follow-up services.

Resources for lead poisoning

For additional information on the Virginia Department of Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, please visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/>.

If you have questions about lead poisoning, please ask your PCP or visit one of these websites:

<https://www.webmd.com/children/prevent-lead-poisoning>

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/guidelines/lead-guidelines.html>

This information is available for free in other languages and formats including online, in large print, Braille or Audio CD. Call Member Services toll free at 1-800-424-4524 (TTY 711) for CCC Plus, or 1-800-424-4518 (TTY 711) for Medallion 4.0 to make a request.

ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene servicios de asistencia de idiomas a su disposición. Llame al 1-800-424-4524 (TTY 711) de CCC Plus o al 1-800-424-4518 (TTY 711) de Medallion 4.0.

참고: 한국어를 사용하고 계신 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. CCC Plus의 경우 1-800-424-4524 (TTY 711)번으로 전화하거나 Medallion 4.0의 경우 1-800-424-4518 (TTY 711)번으로 전화하십시오.

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