

## Is My Child at Risk for Lead Poisoning?

If you can answer “Yes” to ANY of the following questions, please ask your child’s health care provider to test your child.

- Does your child live in or regularly visit a building constructed before 1978, which is undergoing or has undergone renovation or remodeling in the past six months? Such buildings may include daycare centers, preschools, schools, outbuildings (e.g., barns) or homes of babysitters, relatives, friends, etc.
- Does your child have a parent, brother, sister, housemate or playmate being treated for lead poisoning (i.e., blood lead > 5 micrograms / deciliter)?
- Does your child live with someone whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead (e.g., staining glass, painting, soldering, automobile battery manufacturing or recycling, vehicle radiator repair)?
- Is your child often exposed to foreign-made products such as mini-blinds, cosmetics, color crayons, toys, sidewalk chalk or canned foods?
- Do you eat wild game such as venison, elk or pheasant 10 times or more per month?

Low-income families are disproportionately at risk as these families tend to live in older housing which contain Lead-based paint.

## What are the Symptoms of Lead Poisoning?

Most children with lead poisoning do not show any outward symptoms unless blood-lead levels become extremely high. Consequently, many cases of children with lead poisoning go undiagnosed and untreated. However, some symptoms of poisoning include headaches, stomachaches, nausea, tiredness and irritability.

## Where Can I Find More Information?

North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality Lead-Based Paint Program

701.328.5166

[www.deq.nd.gov/WM/Lead](http://www.deq.nd.gov/WM/Lead)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Lead Program

[www2.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family](http://www2.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family)

U.S. Centers for Disease Control – Lead Program

[www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/)

Head Start State Collaboration Office (701) 328-1711

[www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/headstart/](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/headstart/)

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission- Recall List

[www.cpsc.gov/en/Recalls/](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Recalls/)



# Lead Poisoning



## Are Your Kids At Risk?

### What is Lead Poisoning?

Lead is a toxic metal used in a variety of products and materials including paint, vinyl mini blinds, water pipes, lead crystal, dishware and pottery coatings. When lead is absorbed in the body, it causes serious damage to vital organs like the brain and kidneys, as well as to nerve and blood cells. Lead poison is especially harmful to children under the age of six.

## Lead can be found in many common materials, including:

**Paint** Paint used before 1978 may contain lead. Lead-based paint that is chipping, peeling or chalking is a problem, exposing children to lead.

Lead dust is currently the main source of lead poisoning. Lead

**Dust** dust can come from paint and soil that contain lead.

Lead dust mixes with the household dust and can gather on surfaces, in carpets and on toys. Opening and closing windows painted with lead-based paint is a major source of lead dust.

**Soil** Soil around homes and apartment buildings can contain lead. Yards near higher areas of traffic density may also contain lead from fumes, since leaded gasoline was not fully banned until 1995. Children may come into contact with lead by playing in bare dirt. Lead in the soil also may enter vegetables planted in a garden.

### Candy, Toys, Pottery

Some candy imported from Mexico and toys from China contain lead. For information on candy or toys that may contain lead, contact your local or state health department or visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/>. Imported pottery and ceramic cookware may contain lead in the glaze. When food (especially acidic liquid) is stored in these dishes, food can absorb lead.

### Workplace & Hobby Products

Lead can be carried into homes from a workplace (painting, renovation contracting, radiator repair, etc.).

In addition, many products used for personal hobbies (stain glass solder, bullets, fishing sinkers, etc.) can contain lead. Refrain from using lead-based products while engaging in hobbies, if possible.



## How Can Lead Poisoning Be Prevented?

Since treatment options for lead poisoning are limited, it is best to prevent lead poisoning before it has a chance to occur.

The following recommendations may help prevent lead poisoning.

### Housekeeping

Practice and teach healthy home habits, such as hand washing before eating and sleeping, shoe removal, washing children's toys or other chewable surfaces to remove dust, and purchasing "lead-free" mini-blinds.

Keep the places where children play clean and dust free. Regularly wet-wipe floors, window sills and other surfaces that may contain lead dust.

Hire a certified professional to safely remove lead sources from a home. Make sure children and pregnant women do not stay inside a pre-1978 constructed home when renovations are underway.

### A Safer Home

Have children play on grass instead of bare dirt. Lead stays in the soil.

Look for "Contains No Lead" labels on items to which children will have access. When in doubt, check the recall website listed on the back side of label, or remove item from children's reach until certain the item contains no lead.

Take off shoes when entering a home to avoid tracking in soil that may contain lead.

If you work with lead in your job or hobby, change clothes and shower before you go home.



### Healthy Foods

Do not use imported, old or handmade pottery to store food or drinks.

Provide food for young children every two hours because more lead is absorbed when a child's stomach is empty. Serve children foods with a high content of iron (e.g., eggs, cooked beans, red meat), calcium (e.g., cheese, yogurt, cooked greens) and vitamin C (e.g., citrus fruits, green peppers, tomatoes). Adequate intake of these nutrients minimizes lead absorption in children's bodies.

Use only cold water for drinking, cooking or baby formula. Run the water 15-30 seconds until it feels colder.

## How Will I Know if My Child Has Lead Poisoning?

The only way to detect lead poisoning is through a simple blood test performed by a health care provider.

Children six months to two years of age absorb more lead; testing is extremely important for this age group. Have your child's blood lead level tested by his or her health care provider at 12 and 24 months of age. Children with lead in their blood may need more follow-up tests.

All children under the age of six should have their blood-lead levels tested, even if they show no signs of health issues.

Talk to your health care provider to determine if you are at risk for lead exposure during pregnancy. If there is any concern, you need to have a blood lead test.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Human Services-Head Start requires that all low-income Medicaid-eligible children be screened for lead toxicity using a blood test.

