

Cleaning & Lead Poisoning Prevention

Keep It Clean

Regularly cleaning items that could be contaminated with lead can reduce exposure around the home. Controlling lead dust, washing hands, and house cleaning can help. To keep it clean:

- Wash your child's hands frequently, especially before eating and sleeping.
- Wash toys, pacifier, and other items they might put in their mouth.
- Wet wipe down horizontal surfaces routinely to clean up lead dust.
- Pick up paint chips on floor and near window sills.

Practice Good Hygiene

Small children have hand-to-mouth tendencies, so they often place items such as hands and toys in their mouth. If items are contaminated with lead, a child can become poisoned by ingesting small amounts of lead dust. Regularly washing these items is an important step to prevent poisoning:

- Wash hands, face, and mouth often, especially before meals and at naptime.
- Wash toys, pacifiers, and bottles, especially after they fall on the floor.
- Wash surfaces frequently and thoroughly where food is prepared.
- Wash clothes contaminated with lead and dust separately from others.
- Keep fingernails short so that lead dust cannot be easily trapped.



Lead Dust Control

Lead dust can come from chipping or peeling lead paint. Lead dust can enter your home from outside. Control how much lead dust is created or enters the home:

- Frequently clean the house, wipe down surfaces, and mop floors.
- Have people remove their shoes before coming indoors.
- Pick up any paint chips that you find in places where your children play.
- Clean windows, inside sills, and the trim around window and door frames.
- Place washable doormats at all entries of your home. Wash them weekly.
- If you remodel or renovate, follow lead-safe procedures.

Cleaning Hard Surfaces and Floors

Lead dust can accumulate on surfaces inside a home, which can expose your children to unsafe levels of lead. To clean properly:

- Wipe or damp dust flat surfaces with a wet (paper) towel on a frequent basis.
- Wipe down walls, window sills, steps, grates/registers, and baseboards weekly.
- Wet sweep or damp mop floors by spraying floor with cleaning solution or water, then sweeping or mopping.
- Do not dry sweep.

For More Information Visit: www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/

Cleaning Carpeted Floors

- If you know your carpet is contaminated, consider removing the old carpet.
- Replace carpeting with nonporous flooring such as tile or wood makes it easier to clean and it traps less lead dust.
- Do not use a regular household vacuum cleaner to clean up lead paint chips or peeling paint. Instead, use a HEPA vacuum rated for lead dust so that lead dust does not contaminate the air. Loaner HEPA vacuums, call: 315-798-5412.

Lead Poisoning from Windows

People should assume that painted surfaces in homes built before 1978 contain some lead, unless testing shows otherwise. Lead paint in good shape generally doesn't need to be removed. Chipping or cracking lead paint should be addressed.

Make Your Home Lead Safe

Most cases of lead poisoning in the Mohawk Valley are due to lead inside and around a house. To make sure your home is lead safe, you need to find and identify any potential lead hazards in and around your home.

- If your home was built before 1978, have your home tested for lead.
- Don't fix lead-based hazards or renovate until you know how to do it safely.
- Do not dry scrape, sand, heat gun, power wash, or sand blast lead paint.

Sources of Lead

Lead in Paint

Lead-based paint was widely used in homes up until 1978. Lead paint is still found in many older homes today. Other household items may contain lead-based paint, such as toys and furniture. Lead-based paint in poor condition may contaminate a home. Lead paint chips and lead dust are created when there is:

- Chipping, cracking, flaking, or deteriorated paint
- Abrasion, scraping, or friction of painted surfaces
- Disturbance of lead paint during maintenance, renovation, or remodeling

Lead in Dust

Lead may contaminate household dust when lead-based paint is deteriorated or disturbed. Lead dust may collect in carpets, floors, furniture, window sills, and ventilation filters. It may also get on children's hands, toys, bottles, and pacifiers. Frequent cleaning and hand washing may help prevent children from getting sick.

Lead in Soil

The soil around a house, garage, or fence could be contaminated by lead. If a home has been sandblasted or pressure washed, the contamination could extend further out. Soil in Oneida and Herkimer Counties have tested positive for lead.

Lead from Work

Workers may bring lead home with them from a job site that may contaminate a home environment. Adults exposed to lead on a job may also be lead poisoned.

Workers should take precautions if they work at any of these jobs or worksites:

- Contractors who renovate or repair homes or buildings built before 1978.
- Demolition workers who work on old structures, bridges, or use cutting torches.
- Construction workers or manufacturers who sand, scrape, heat, or blast paint.
- Recyclers of metal, electronics, and batteries
- Workers or manufacturers of bullets, ceramics, electronics, and jewelry
- Firing range workers, gunsmiths, or police officers
- Foundries and scrap metal operations, lead smelters, or steel workers

Lead Toys and Jewelry

Some toys and play jewelry may contain lead and could put children at risk. Toys made in other countries are more likely to contain lead. Other toys that may contain lead could be old or antique toys that were passed down.

Lead in Candy, Food, and Dishes

Lead has been found in some candy imported from Mexico, especially those made with tamarind or chili powder. Lead may be present in imported cans, antique pewter, imported glazed pottery, porcelain, and leaded glass. Do not store food in any of these containers. Lead dust on counters, dishes, and hands may also contaminate food. It's important to clean surfaces, hands, and food before cooking or eating.

Lead in Folk and Traditional Medicines

Lead has been found in some traditional and folk medicines. Lead may also be found in powders and tablets given for arthritis, infertility, upset stomach, colic, menstrual cramps, and other illnesses. Talk to your doctor if you or your family uses folk medicines. Examples of these medicines include:

- Daw Tway
- Bhasma
- Smrti
- Ba-baw-san
- Ghasard
- Greta
- Azarcon

Hobbies Involving Lead

Hobbies that could introduce lead to the home include those that work with:

- Fishing sinkers
- Computer electronics
- Automotive repair
- Stained glass
- Reloading bullets

Lead in Water

Water may dissolve lead that is present in older fittings, lead pipes, or solder. In Oneida & Herkimer Counties, lead in water is a lower risk than paint hazards.

Other Potential Lead Sources

- Plumbing fixtures
- Old bathtubs
- Keys
- Lead wicks in candles
- Insecticides
- Battery casings
- Drapery, mini-blinds, and window weights

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There is no safe level of lead in the blood

Medical Check-ups

Regularly visit a health care provider to help prevent lead poisoning. A doctor can perform or order the required lead tests for children at age 1 & at age 2.

- If your child is at risk or if you are concerned about lead in your home, ask your child's doctor about blood lead testing as early as 6-months and up to age 6.
- Contact your County Health Department for more information about testing.

Healthy Diets

Nutrition can play a pivotal role in preventing childhood lead poisoning. Good nutrition helps reduce the amount of lead that is absorbed in the body. A child's body requires certain minerals, and children whose diet is deficient in these nutrients can make lead poisoning worse. Parents should ensure children eat:

- Regular healthy meals and healthy snacks during the day.
- Foods rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C.

Regular Meals

An empty stomach absorbs more lead. By feeding your child healthy meals and snacks each day, it will help the body to absorb less lead.

Foods Rich in Iron

Children need to have plenty of iron in their system. To the body, iron and lead look very similar. When there is more iron than lead, the body will absorb the iron.

- Iron-fortified cereals
- Green leafy vegetables
- Pureed meats
- Lean red meats
- Tuna, salmon, fish
- Raisins and prunes
- Dried beans and peas
- Skinless poultry
- Nuts and seeds

Foods Rich in Calcium

Foods that are high in calcium can also help the body absorb less lead.

- Milk and dairy products
- Cheese and Yogurt
- Tofu
- Green leafy vegetables
- Salmon
- Peanuts
- Calcium-enriched juice

Foods Rich in Vitamin C

Vitamin C will help the body absorb more iron and calcium.

- Oranges and tangerines
- Grapefruit
- Strawberries
- Limes and lemons
- Cantaloupe
- Kiwi
- Tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Bell peppers
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes

Foods to Avoid

- Foods stored in lead-soldered cans, glazed ceramic dishes or crystal.
- Foods that could have picked up lead dust or food that has fallen on the floor.
- Vegetables grown in lead-contaminated soil.
- Food stored in printed plastic bread bags (wrapper ink may contain lead).
- Candy that can contain lead or Mexican candy with tamarind or chili powder.
- Folk medicines shown to contain lead.

Common Questions on Lead Poisoning

What is lead poisoning?

Lead is a toxic metal that has been used in products for centuries. Once it enters the body, lead can accumulate and cause permanent damage. Children can become lead poisoned if they are exposed to lead in their environment.

How do children get lead poisoning?

Children get lead poisoned by inhaling or swallowing small amounts of lead. Lead-based paint is the most common cause of lead poisoning and it is found in many older homes. When lead paint deteriorates, lead dust can contaminate the home and can get on children's hands, toys, bottles, and pacifiers. Lead can come from sources other than lead-based paint, like from soil, water, or a parent's worksite.

What can lead poisoning do to my child?

Children are most vulnerable in the womb through age six because developing bodies absorb lead easier. Lead can damage the brain, nervous system, and other parts of the body. Lead poisoning can cause delayed development, growth, hearing loss, learning disabilities, decreased intelligence, and behavioral problems. In extreme cases, it can lead to severe coma and death. Lead poisoning in pregnant women can increase the risk for premature and low-birth weight newborns.

How can I tell if my child has lead poisoning?

Most children with lead poisoning do not have symptoms. A health care provider can perform a blood test to determine how much lead is present.

Which children should be tested for lead?

ALL Children at age 1 and at age 2. If a child is at higher risk or if you are concerned about lead in your home. Children are considered at a higher risk if they:

- Live in a designated target community – Cornhill & West Utica.
- Live or often visit a house, daycare or home of a relative built before 1978.
- Live or visit in a pre-1978 home renovated or remodeled within the last year.
- Have a brother, sister, or playmate with lead poisoning.
- Live with a family that use home remedies or certain cultural practices.
- Are in a special population group, such as foreign adoptees, refugees, migrants, immigrants, foster care or are enrolled in Medicaid.

How can I protect my child from lead poisoning?

- Locate all lead risks in your home or day-care and educate yourself about lead.
- Clean your house regularly, practice safe housekeeping and yard maintenance.
- Keep children away from areas with chipping and peeling paint or bare soil.
- Do not allow children to eat paint chips, eat soil, or chew on painted surfaces.
- Make sure your children eat a well-balanced diet.

Can adults be lead poisoned?

Yes, adults can be lead poisoned, especially if they have a job involving lead.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Tips

Reducing exposures to lead in the environment can help prevent poisoning



Source Information: <http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/LeadPrevention.aspx>
Photo Credit: Harvard University Health

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