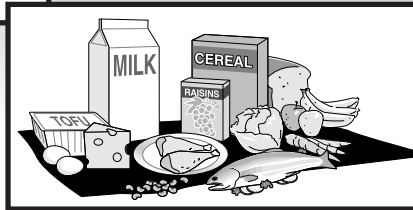


Lead Poisoning



*A guide for
protecting your child*



KAISER PERMANENTE®

REGIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION

Lead Poisoning

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protecting your child*



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What is lead?

Lead is a substance found in water, soil, dust, foods—even in the air. Lead has been around for centuries and is used in many industries today. We all have a little bit of lead in our bodies.

What is lead poisoning?

Too much lead can cause lead poisoning, a medical problem that can damage the brain, nerves, red blood cells, digestive system, and other organs.

Who is at highest risk for lead poisoning?

- **Children who spend a lot of time in a building constructed before 1978 that has peeling or chipped paint or that has been recently renovated:** Sanding, burning or scraping lead paint creates invisible lead dust that can be swallowed or inhaled by your child.
- **Children who receive public assistance:** This includes WIC or MediCal.

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- **Children who put anything with lead on it in their mouths:** Examples include paint, dust, or soil on a dirty toy, paintbrush, garage tool, or shovel.
- **Adults who work in lead:** That can accidentally bring lead home on their clothes, skin, or hair. Jobs with lead exposure include mining, smelting, plumbing, demolition, auto repair, battery manufacture, repair or rebuilding automotive radiators, and other high-lead industries.
- **People who drink or eat from lead glazed pottery:** This also includes lead-soldered cans and lead crystal glassware.
- **Children with a parent whose work or hobby uses lead:** Lead dust from the adult's clothes can easily be picked up or breathed in by the child.
- **Children with a family member or playmate being treated for lead poisoning:** This could mean that your child was exposed, too.
- **Children who play in dirt near highways, construction sites, a garage, or in empty lots or parks that once held factories:** These areas may still have large amounts of lead in the soil from auto emissions, industrial waste, and disintegrated paint.

10 steps to reduce lead exposure

1. **Always test painted surfaces for lead content** before you start any remodeling or home repair project. Never sand, scrape, or burn paint until you're sure that it doesn't contain lead. Call your city health department to find out how to test for lead and how to paint your home safely. If the paint contains lead, don't start your project until you learn safe paint-handling techniques. You risk scattering lead dust and poisoning yourself, your family, and your neighbors. If your house has relatively new paint, remember that this new layer can peel and reveal an old layer of high-lead paint underneath.



*Wash hands
and face
before eating.*

2. **Always have children wash their hands and faces before eating, and wash toys and pacifiers often.**
3. **Keep your home as dust-free as possible.** Wet-mop at least once a week with water and a household detergent containing 5 to 8 percent phosphates. (The phosphate level of detergents and cleansers is listed on the container, or you can buy trisodium phosphate

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Wet-mop once a week.

in a hardware store and add it to your cleaner.) Wipe windowsills and baseboards with this solution, as well. Don't sweep or vacuum hard surfaces because this spreads the dust around instead of removing it. Vacuums with rotating brushes remove dust from rugs better than those with suction only.

4. **Move cribs, playpens, and highchairs** away from areas where paint is chipping, peeling, or cracking.
5. **Change out of all work clothes**, including shoes and hats, and take a shower or bath before coming home if you work in a lead-exposure job.
6. **Plant bushes in areas** around your home that may have been contaminated by lead (such as where old exterior walls once stood) so children can't play there.

7. **Provide regular meals and healthy snacks** for children. More lead is absorbed on an empty stomach. Have your child eat fruits and vegetables every day. Children who don't eat enough calcium or iron-rich foods absorb more lead when they're exposed. Calcium and iron-rich foods are milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu, meat, chicken, fish, raisins, eggs, liver, beans, spinach, greens, and iron-enriched cereals.

8. **Do not use high-lead home remedies** and cosmetics. Always read the labels to find out if lead is a main ingredient. Some Latino, Indian, and Asian home remedies that have lead in them include:

- Alarcon
- Aikohl
- Azarcon
- Bali Goli
- Coral
- Ghasard
- Greta
- Liga
- Pay-loo-ah
- Rueda

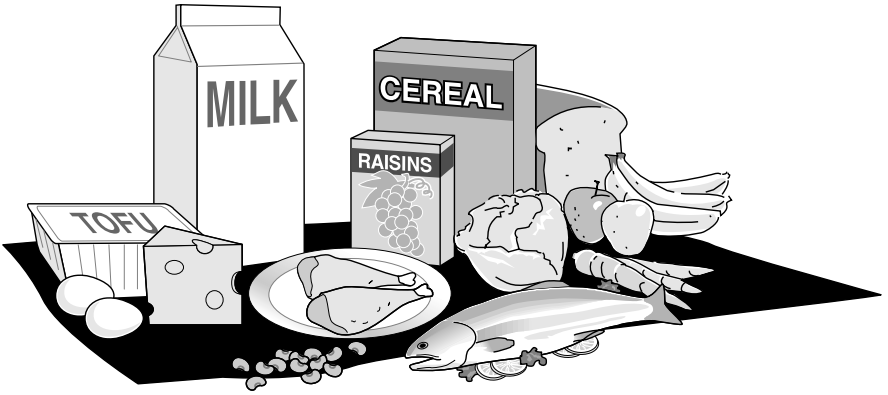
9. **Do not use imported or hand-made dishes** for serving, preparing, or storing foods or beverages because lead can seep into your food. Don't store foods in imported, open cans, which can also contain high levels of lead.

10. **Do not participate in hobbies that use lead**, such as making stained glass or fishing sinkers, or find a way to stop or replace the part of the hobby that involves handling or soldering lead.



Don't let children play near remodeling or repair projects.

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Have children eat fruit, vegetables, milk or tofu, whole grains, and meat every day.

If you're still concerned . . .

Talk with your pediatrician or nurse practitioner. Together, you can help assess the risk of lead exposure that your child faces.

Additional Resources

- Connect to our Web site at **members.kp.org**. Here you'll find the Health encyclopedia, which offers more in-depth information on this and many other topics.
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*.
- Listen to the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone at 1-800-332-7563. For TTY, call 1-800-777-9059.
- Visit your facility's Health Education Department for books, videos, classes, and additional resources.

NOTES

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This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other medical professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

