

LEAD POISONING

Lead poisoning occurs when the body is exposed to a large amount of lead OR continuous small amounts of lead



Risk Factors for Children

- Children under the age of six are at the highest risk for lead poisoning because:
- They have a great deal of hand-to-mouth contact that can bring lead directly into their bodies.
- Young children play around window sills, walls, railings, and dirt that may contain lead-based paint
- They are at a critical developmental stage in their lives and lead negatively affects their growth and development
- Lead poisoning can cause severe health, learning and behavioral problems in children

Health Risks

Symptoms:

- Lack of attention
- Learning difficulties
- Lack of coordination
- Speech difficulties
- Hearing impairment
- Lack of energy
- Growth problems
- Hyperactivity
- Irritability
- Loss of appetite
- Constipation
- Change in sleep patterns



Severe symptoms:

- Kidney damage
- High blood pressure
- Brain Damage
- Damage to reproductive organs

Note: Many people with high levels of lead do not appear to be sick. Also, these symptoms can be a result of other causes. To determine if your child has lead poisoning, have a blood test done.

Testing

- ◆ A blood test is the only way to determine if a child has lead poisoning.
- ◆ Children six years and younger should be tested on an annual basis if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - Live or play in houses built before the 1980's
 - Live with a person who is exposed to lead at work or through a hobby
 - Live or play around an older home that is being remodeled

Resources

Lead Screening

The health department offers free blood tests to children under the age of six

Risk Assessment for your Home

You can have the paint in your home tested for lead by the health department. This is a free service. Also, the staff is available to help you with questions and concerns about the results of the tests.

Prevention

- ◆ Find and remove sources of lead in the home such as lead paint
- ◆ A balanced diet high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C is important in helping your child's body absorb less lead.

Recommended Foods:

Calcium-rich

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Low-fat cheese
- Tofu
- Cottage cheese



Vitamin C-rich

- Oranges
- Broccoli
- Grapefruit
- Green leafy vegetables



Iron-rich

- Raisins
- Low-fat pork
- Iron-fortified cereal
- Lean red meat
- Dried beans peas



Avoid foods high in fats and oils because they help the body absorb lead more easily

Sources of Lead

- Lead-based paint is the main source. It can be found in:
 - Homes built before the 1980's
 - Older or Imported toys
 - Older, painted furniture
 - Dust from worn paint
- Soil contaminated with paint chips
- Lead solder on pipes can contaminate water
- Brass keys and faucets
- People exposed to lead at work bring it home on their clothes and bodies



Lead Poisoning and Your Child

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