

Lead Fact Sheet

Lead is a metal that is found in nature and is used in many industries and products.

Lead is widespread in the environment and is found in

- Peeling paint and dust in and around homes built before 1978 (when lead was banned in house paint).
- Bare soil around homes built before 1978 and near roadways.
- Job sites or hobby areas, such as construction and painting sites, shooting ranges, and electronics, battery and scrap metal recycling facilities.
- Some candies and spices from Mexico and Asia, and some brightly colored traditional remedies such as Azarcon and Greta.
- Many consumer products, including:
 - Some ceramic dishes and pottery; some pewter and crystal pitchers and goblets.
 - Some baby bibs, electrical cords, purses, garden hoses, and other products made of vinyl or imitation leather.
 - Some toys, art supplies, costume jewelry, cosmetics, and hair dyes.
 - Some brass faucets, fishing sinkers, and curtain weights.

Possible health concerns

Lead:

- Can affect brain development and contribute to learning problems in infants and young children.
- Can increase blood pressure, decrease kidney and brain function, and cause reproductive problems.
- May increase cancer risk.

Possible ways to reduce exposure

- Keep children away from chipped and peeling paint. Use a certified professional if you plan to permanently remove or seal lead-based paint.
- Cover bare soil with grass, bark, or gravel, especially near homes built before 1978.
- If you work with lead or do house renovation, use proper protective gear. Keep work dust out of your home. Shower after working. Wash work clothes separately.
- Use cold water for drinking or cooking to reduce release of lead from some faucets and old pipes.
- Wash your and your children's hands before eating or drinking.
- Clean your floors regularly, using a wet mop where you can, and dust with a damp cloth.
- Eat a well-balanced diet with adequate calcium, iron, and vitamin C, which can help reduce the amount of lead that your body absorbs.

For more information:

California's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch at (510) 620-5600, or go to: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CLPPB/Pages/default.aspx
 California's Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (510) 620-5740, or go to: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Pages/default.aspx