

# 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

- Chipped and 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, or near roadways.
- Job sites or hobby areas, such as construction and painting sites, shooting ranges, and recycling facilities for electronics, batteries, and scrap metal.
- Some candies and spices from Mexico and Asia.
- Some traditional remedies, especially brightly colored remedies like Azarcón and Greta.
- Many consumer products, including:
  - Some ceramic dishes and pottery, and 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 weights and 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 around homes built before 1978 and homes near roadways.
- If you work with lead or do house renovation, use proper protective equipment. Follow other safe work practices, including washing hands frequently, keeping work dust out of your home, and washing work clothes separately.
- Use cold water for drinking and cooking to reduce the release of lead from some faucets and old pipes.
- Because lead can collect in dust:
  - Wash your and your child's hands often, especially before preparing or eating food.
  - Clean your floors regularly, using a wet mop or HEPA vacuum if possible, and use a damp cloth to dust.
- Eat a well-balanced diet with enough 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 Program at (510) 620-5600, or go to:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/CLPPB/Pages/CLPPBhome.aspx>

California's Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (510) 620-5740, or go to:  
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/OHB/OLPPP/Pages/OLPPP.aspx>