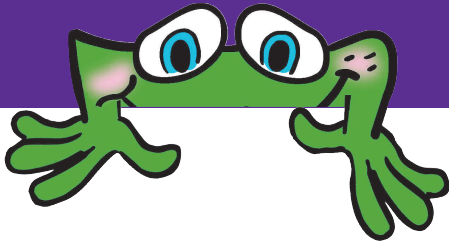


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WHAT IS IT? Lead poisoning occurs when there is an increased level of the metal lead in the blood, usually resulting from the ingestion of lead-contaminated soil, water, or paint dust and chips. Lead poisoning in children ages 6 and under remains an especially serious health concern to this day.

WHY SHOULD I CARE?

Lead poisoning can cause **serious and permanent health problems**. High levels of lead in the body can cause **severe cramps, seizures, brain injury, and even death**.

Even low levels of lead can harm a child's developing brain and nervous system, leading to **reduced IQ and learning disabilities**. Lead can also pass from a pregnant mother to her unborn child.

WHERE IS IT?

Lead can be found indoors and out. Indoors, deteriorating **lead paint (found in houses built before 1978)** can flake and chip, resulting in **paint particles or dust that can be ingested** by young children and expectant mothers, especially when construction and renovations take place. **Water can become contaminated** with lead by sitting in household pipes overnight and can contribute to the accumulation of lead in a child's body. More recently, **lead has been found in imported jewelry, toys, and in some lipsticks**.

Outdoors, soil near heavily traveled roadways and bridges where old paint has been stripped, may also contain high levels of lead. **Until lead is removed from old houses and the environment, childhood lead poisonings will continue to occur.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO: MINIMIZE EXPOSURE. REDUCE RISK.

- **If your house was built before 1978, have it professionally tested for lead content** – especially window sills and window wells, where paint typically chips and flakes and is just the right height for teething children.
- **Have all lead paint removed** by a certified lead paint abatement contractor.
- **Temporarily relocate pregnant women and children** during home renovations involving lead paint. They should not return until the area is declared "lead free" by a certified lead abatement specialist.
- **Reduce possible lead content in water** by running cold water for 30 seconds before using it for cooking or drinking, if it has been sitting in the pipes for several hours (ex. overnight or after work).
- **Wash your children's hands frequently** – especially before eating and after playing outdoors, in order to reduce the chances of ingesting lead from contaminated dust or soil.
- **Read labels to check contents and ingredients** of toys and jewelry. Avoid purchasing questionable, non-labeled or imported items. Choose toys made in the USA only, where lead is prohibited.

