

LEAD POISONING FACTS



- Buildup of lead in the body is referred to as lead poisoning.
- Lead is a naturally occurring metal that has been used in many products and is harmful to the human body.
- There is no known safe level of lead in the body.



EFFECTS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

Children 1-6 years old are the most at risk for lead poisoning.

- Lead poisoning can harm a child's nervous system and brain when they are still forming, causing learning and behavior problems that may last a lifetime.

- Lead can lead to a low blood count (anemia).
- Even small amounts of lead in the body can make it hard for children to learn, pay attention, and succeed in school.



LEAD IN TAP WATER

The only way to know if tap water has lead is to have it tested.

IN THE US:

- Lead in house paint was severely reduced in 1978.
- Lead solder in food cans was banned in the 1980s.
- Lead in gasoline was removed in the early 1990s.

Flush the pipes in your home

Let water run at least 30 seconds before using it for cooking, drinking, or baby formula (if used). If water has not been used for 6 hours or longer, let water run until it feels cold (1 to 5 minutes).*

- **Use only cold tap water for cooking, drinking, or baby formula (if used)**
If water needs to be heated, use cold water and heat on stove or in microwave.
- **Care for your plumbing**
Lead solder should not be used for plumbing work. Periodically remove faucet strainers and run water for 3-5 minutes.*

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF LEAD

- **Filter your water**

Consider using a water filter certified to remove lead.

WARNING! Some water crocks have lead. Do not give a child water from a water crock unless you know the crock does not have lead.



(*Water saving tip: Collect your running water and use it to water plants not intended for eating.)

For information on testing your water for lead, visit the Environmental Protection Agency at their [website](#) or call (800) 426-4791. You can also visit the California Department of Public Health's website at www.cdph.ca.gov.

SYMPTOMS OF LEAD EXPOSURE

For more information, go to the California Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch's [website](#), or call them at (510) 620-5600.



stomachache, crankiness, headaches, or loss of appetite.

- Old paint, especially if it is chipped or peeling or if the home has been recently repaired or remodeled
- House dust
- Soil
- Some imported dishes, pots and water crocks. Some older dishware, especially if it is cracked, chipped, or worn
- Work clothes and shoes worn if working with lead
- Some food, candies and spices from other countries
- Some jewelry, toys, and other consumer products
- Some traditional home remedies and traditional make-up
- Lead fishing weights and lead bullets
- Water, especially if plumbing materials contain lead



Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick. Symptoms, if any, may be confused with common childhood complaints such as



The information and images found on this publication are adapted from the California Department of Public Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

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