



Lead in Paint

Why is lead in paint?

Lead was used to make paint last longer. In 1978, lead was significantly reduced in house paint. If your home was built before 1978, there may be lead in the paint. Lead-based paint is still one of the most common sources of lead poisoning in children.

How does lead get from the paint into my child?

Any person can become lead poisoned, but a child younger than 6 years old is at a higher risk. Over time, painted surfaces crumble into household dust. This dust clings to toys, fingers and other objects that children put in their mouths. This is the most common way that lead gets into your child. This lead containing dust can also get into the soil around the home.

A pregnant woman can also pass lead to her unborn child. The baby can be born too small or too early. If a pregnant woman's lead level is very high, there is a higher chance of a miscarriage.

Lead is a poison that can harm the brain, kidneys, and other organs, especially in children. Even a small amount of lead in a child's body can impact their development, making it hard for them to learn, pay attention, and behave.

Lead gets into your body and into your child's body by:

- eating or breathing dust that is contaminated by lead, including lead from paint
- chewing surfaces such as windowsills painted with leaded paint or eating lead paint chips or soil contaminated by lead from paint from former leaded gasoline emissions or from industrial air emissions.

- eating lead contaminated fruits and vegetables that were not thoroughly washed or that absorbed lead from the soil
- eating food off dishes made with lead or food stored in leaded dishware (such as crystal, some imported pottery and some ceramic dishes)
- placing items in your mouth that are contaminated with lead (some toys, jewelry, keys, etc.)
- drinking tap water that has lead in it (some homes may have leaded pipes or fixtures that may leach into the water).

Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act obviously sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is to have your doctor give your child a blood test for lead. At risk children should be tested at 1 and 2 years old for lead poisoning. Also, children should be tested if they are between the ages of 1 and 6 years and have not been tested for lead before.

Who's at risk?

Children under 6 years old and fetuses are at greatest risk of harmful health effects from lead poisoning.

Children who live or spend significant amount of time in pre-1978 housing or buildings with paint in poor condition or undergoing renovation may be exposed. Also, children in publicly supported programs such as Medi-Cal, CHDP and Women, Infant and Children (WIC) are at greater risk.

What do I do if my home has been painted with lead-based paint?

There are many dangers involved in removing lead paint from your home. Every member of your family can be poisoned if removal is done incorrectly. There are safe ways to make the lead paint in your home less dangerous. In many situations, individuals receiving payment require certification. Information about lead safe work practices and lead certification may be found in the pamphlet Repainting or Fixing Up Your Older Home? which may be found in multiple languages at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/CLPPB/Pages/CLPPBhome.aspx>. More detail information about lead safe work practices of the

brochure Steps to Lead Safe Renovation, Repair and Repainting can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/>.

Sanding, burning or scraping lead paint is a dangerous way of removing lead paint. Lead paint may need to be removed by certified contractors who have been trained in safe paint removal.

Before work begins:

Pregnant women, children, and family pets should not be present when this type of work is being done. Only those who are working should be in the home and the work area should be sealed off from the rest of the house with heavy plastic and tape.

Paint may be presumed to have lead in it, and lead-safe work can be used. Otherwise, paint may be tested in any area you plan to remodel before you begin the work. If an individual is compensated, a California Department of Health Certification is required in order to test. If lead is present, or a house built before 1978 is not tested, then certification is required by contractors hired to work on the home.

California certification is required by those **intentionally** testing for or removing lead and federal certification may be required by those working on older homes that may **unintentionally** disturb lead when performing the work. For more information, go to [Remodeling or Fixing Up Your Older Home?](#) Paint may be presumed to have lead and lead-safe used.

Otherwise, paint may be tested in any area you plan to remodel before you begin the work to make sure a contractor is not required for the job if lead is present.

As discussed in “Repairing or Fixing Up Your Older Home?” California certification is required by those intentionally test for or removing lead paint. Those working in older homes that may unintentionally disturb lead when performing their work.

For more information, contact the Solano County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (707) 784-8070.

