



Lead in Paint

Why is lead in paint?

Lead was used to make paint last longer. If your home was built before 1978, there is probably lead in the paint inside and outside. In 1978, Lead was removed from paint. Lead-based paint is the most common source of lead poisoning in children.

How much is too much?

The danger from lead paint depends on:

- The amount of lead in the painted surface
- The condition of the paint
- The amount of paint that gets into your child

Lead levels in paint are measured in parts per million (**ppm**). The greater the amounts of lead in paint, the higher the ppm number. If paint is peeling or chipping, a child can easily eat it during normal play.

How does the lead get from the paint into my child?

Over many years, painted surfaces crumble into household dust. This dust clings to toys, fingers and other objects that children normally put in their mouths. This is the most common way that lead gets into your child.

Children also get lead into their bodies by chewing on lead painted surfaces. Some young children eat paint that is peeling or chipping.

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 three ways to make the lead paint in your home less dangerous. The first two below are the safest ways to handle lead paint and they should be considered first.

Replace it.

Replacing a lead painted object means removing the object from the house and replacing it with a new, lead-free item. For example, a door may be removed by its hinges and replaced with a new, safe door. Do not burn any lead-painted item you remove from your home. Wrap the item in heavy plastic and keep it away from your children. This takes the lead out of your home and it does not create a lot of lead dust.

Cover it.

It best to cover surfaces that cannot be replaced, such as walls or floors, with a long lasting, tough material like sheetrock, paneling or floor tiles. Because covering does not get the lead paint out of your home, walls or floors that are newly covered must be kept in good condition. **Repainting with new paint or hanging wallpaper covers lead paint. However, if the new paint or wallpaper peels, the lead paint will be exposed again.**

Remove it.

Sanding, burning or scraping lead paint is the most dangerous way of removing lead paint. Lead paint needs 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.
- Test the paint in any area you plan to remodel before you begin the work to make sure a contractor isn't required for the job if lead is present.

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



The information on this page was developed by Santa Clara County CLPPP.