

Checking Your Home for Lead Hazards

Just knowing that a home has lead-based paint may not tell you if there is a hazard.

You can get your home checked for lead hazards in one of two ways, or both:

- ◆ A **paint inspection** tells you the lead content of every different type of painted surface in your home. It won't tell you whether the paint is a hazard or how you should deal with it.
- ◆ A **risk assessment** tells you if there are any sources of serious lead exposure (such as peeling paint and lead dust). It also tells you what actions to take to address these hazards.

Have qualified professionals do the work. *There are standards in place for certifying lead-based paint professionals to ensure the work is done safely, reliably, and effectively.* Contact your state lead poisoning prevention program for more information. Call 1-800-424-LEAD for a list of contacts in your area.

Trained professionals use a range of methods when checking your home, including:

- ◆ Visual inspection of paint condition and location.
- ◆ A portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) machine.
- ◆ Lab tests of paint samples.
- ◆ Surface dust tests.

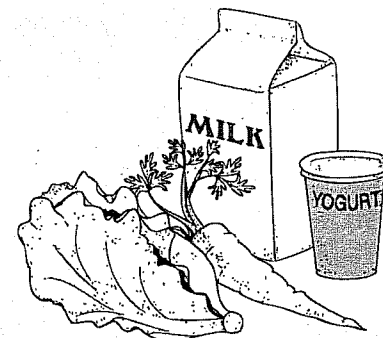
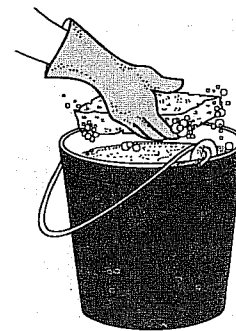
Home test kits for lead are available, but studies suggest that they are not always accurate. Consumers should not rely on these tests before doing renovations or to assure safety.



What You Can Do Now To Protect Your Family

If you suspect that your house has lead hazards, you can take some immediate steps to reduce your family's risk:

- ◆ If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- ◆ Clean up paint chips immediately.
- ◆ Clean floors, window frames, window sills, and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead. REMEMBER: NEVER MIX AMMONIA AND BLEACH PRODUCTS TOGETHER SINCE THEY CAN FORM A DANGEROUS GAS.
- ◆ Thoroughly rinse sponges and mop heads after cleaning dirty or dusty areas.
- ◆ Wash children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
- ◆ Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
- ◆ Keep children from chewing window sills or other painted surfaces.
- ◆ Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- ◆ Make sure children eat nutritious, low-fat meals high in iron and calcium, such as spinach and dairy products. Children with good diets absorb less lead.



Where Lead-Based Paint Is Found

In general, the older your home, the more likely it has lead-based paint.

Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. The federal government banned lead-based paint from housing in 1978. Some states stopped its use even earlier. Lead can be found:

- ◆ In homes in the city, country, or suburbs.
- ◆ In apartments, single-family homes, and both private and public housing.
- ◆ Inside *and* outside of the house.
- ◆ In soil around a home. (Soil can pick up lead from exterior paint or other sources such as past use of leaded gas in cars.)

Checking Your Family for Lead

Get your children and home tested if you think your home has high levels of lead.

To reduce your child's exposure to lead, get your child checked, have your home tested (especially if your home has paint in poor condition and was built before 1978), and fix any hazards you may have. Children's blood lead levels tend to increase rapidly from 6 to 12 months of age, and tend to peak at 18 to 24 months of age.

Consult your doctor for advice on testing your children. A simple blood test can detect high levels of lead. Blood tests are usually recommended for:

- ◆ Children at ages 1 and 2.
- ◆ Children or other family members who have been exposed to high levels of lead.
- ◆ Children who should be tested under your state or local health screening plan.

Your doctor can explain what the test results mean and if more testing will be needed.

Remodeling or Renovating a Home With Lead-Based Paint

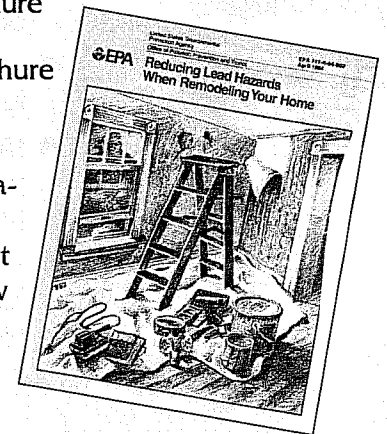
Take precautions before your contractor or you begin remodeling or renovations that disturb painted surfaces (such as scraping off paint or tearing out walls):

- ◆ **Have the area tested for lead-based paint.**
- ◆ **Do not use a belt-sander, propane torch, heat gun, dry scraper, or dry sandpaper** to remove lead-based paint. These actions create large amounts of lead dust and fumes. Lead dust can remain in your home long after the work is done.
- ◆ **Temporarily move your family** (especially children and pregnant women) out of the apartment or house until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned. If you can't move your family, at least completely seal off the work area.
- ◆ **Follow other safety measures to reduce lead hazards.** You can find out about other safety measures by calling 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask for the brochure "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home." This brochure explains what to do before, during, and after renovations.

If you have already completed renovations or remodeling that could have released lead-based paint or dust, get your young children tested and follow the steps outlined on page 7 of this brochure.



If not conducted properly, certain types of renovations can release lead from paint and dust into the air.



Lead Gets in the Body in Many Ways

In the United States, about 900,000 children ages 1 to 5 have a blood-lead level above the level of concern.

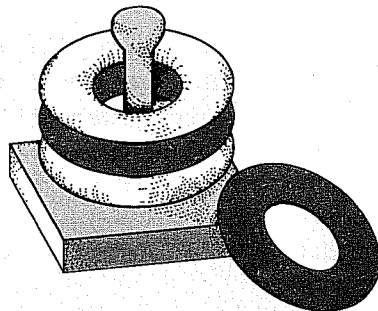
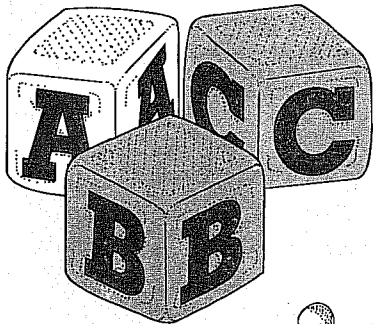
Even children who appear healthy can have dangerous levels of lead in their bodies.

People can get lead in their body if they:

- ◆ Put their hands or other objects covered with lead dust in their mouths.
- ◆ Eat paint chips or soil that contains lead.
- ◆ Breathe in lead dust (especially during renovations that disturb painted surfaces).

Lead is even more dangerous to children than adults because:

- ◆ Babies and young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths. These objects can have lead dust on them.
- ◆ Children's growing bodies absorb more lead.
- ◆ Children's brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead.

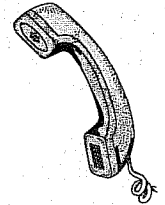


For More Information

The National Lead Information Center

Call **1-800-424-LEAD** to learn how to protect children from lead poisoning and for other information on lead hazards. (Internet: www.epa.gov/lead and www.hud.gov/lea).

For the hearing impaired, call the Federal Information Relay Service at **1-800-877-8339** and ask for the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD**.

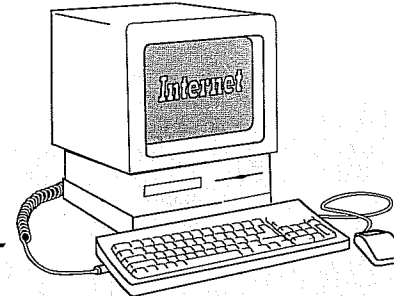


EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline

Call **1-800-426-4791** for information about lead in drinking water.

Consumer Product Safety Commission Hotline

To request information on lead in consumer products, or to report an unsafe consumer product or a product-related injury call **1-800-638-2772**. (Internet: www.cpsc.gov). For the hearing impaired, call **TDD 1-800-638-8270**.



State Health and Environmental Agencies

Some cities and states have their own rules for lead-based paint activities. Check with your state agency to see if state or local laws apply to you. Most state agencies can also provide information on finding a lead abatement firm in your area, and on possible sources of financial aid for reducing lead hazards. Receive up-to-date address and phone information for state and local contacts on the Internet at www.epa.gov/lead or contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD**.

Are You Planning To Buy, Rent, or Renovate a Home Built Before 1978?

Many houses and apartments built before 1978 have paint that contains lead (called lead-based paint). Lead from paint, chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards if not taken care of properly.

Federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renting, buying, or renovating pre-1978 housing:



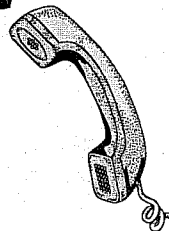
LANDLORDS have to disclose known information on lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards before leases take effect. Leases must include a disclosure form about lead-based paint.



SELLERS have to disclose known information on lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards before selling a house. Sales contracts must include a disclosure form about lead-based paint. Buyers have up to 10 days to check for lead hazards.



RENOVATORS have to give you this pamphlet before starting work. (After June 1, 1999.)



IF YOU WANT MORE INFORMATION on these requirements, call the National Lead Information Clearinghouse at **1-800-424-LEAD**.

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CPSC Regional Offices

Your Regional CPSC Office can provide further information regarding regulations and consumer product safety.

Eastern Regional Center
6 World Trade Center
Vesey Street, Room 350
New York, NY 10048
(212) 466-1612

Western Regional Center
600 Harrison Street, Room 245
San Francisco, CA 94107
(415) 744-2966

Central Regional Center
230 South Dearborn Street
Room 2944
Chicago, IL 60604-1601
(312) 353-8260

HUD Lead Office

Please contact HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control for information on lead regulations, outreach efforts, and lead hazard control and research grant programs.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Lead Hazard Control
451 Seventh Street, SW, P-3206
Washington, DC 20410
(202) 755-1785