

## Learn How to Protect Your Child

If you have a young child, read this pamphlet and use the lead poisoning prevention checklist. This pamphlet answers the questions most parents ask about lead. The checklist will help you protect your family. Know that lead poisoning can be prevented!

## A Special Message for Pregnant Women

If you are pregnant or planning to get pregnant, avoid any place or activity that may expose you to lead. Lead can pass from the mother and harm the growing fetus (baby).

### For more information contact:

- ❖ NJ DHSS - Child & Adolescent Health Program (609) 292-5666
- ❖ [www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/newborn/lead.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/newborn/lead.shtml)
- ❖ Your Local Health Department
- ❖ Your Child's Doctor or Health Care Center

## Lead Poisoning Prevention Checklist for Parents

- Wash your child's hands and face:
  - Before meals and snacks
  - Before naps and bedtime
  - After playing outside
- Wash toys and pacifiers everyday.
- Wet wipe window wells and sills and floors at least once a week with a household detergent.
- Give your child regular meals with foods high in iron and calcium (lean meats, fortified cereals, beans, greens, eggs, milk and cheese).
- Let water run from the cold water faucet for 1 minute before using water for drinking, cooking or preparing infant formula, juice or instant cereal.
- Keep your child away from peeling or chipping paint.
- Keep your child away from any place where paint is being removed. Do not return to that area until a safe cleanup has been done.
- Call your local health department for information about safe removal and cleanup of paint.

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## Questions Parents Ask About



## Childhood Lead Poisoning



Chris Christie  
Governor



Heather Howard  
Commissioner

## What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning means there is too much lead in the body. All children and adults get some lead from the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

Infants and toddlers are exposed to more lead than older children and adults because they are curious and enjoy hand-to-mouth activities.

## Why is lead harmful?

Lead can hurt your child's growing brain and nervous system.

In children under age 6, lead can cause slow growth, slow learning, and behavior problems that may not show up right away.

The longer your child is exposed to lead, the more damage it does.

## Where does lead come from?

Lead is a metal found naturally in the earth. Lead still has some uses in industry but there is no use for lead in our bodies. The most common sources of lead are old paint and lead in dust and soil.

If your home was built before 1978, it may contain lead-based paint.

Lead in dust and soil are major sources of exposure for all children because it gets on their hands, toys and pacifiers.

Repairing an old house or apartment can increase your family's exposure to lead dust.

Young children also can get high doses of lead from eating peeling, chipping paint on walls, woodwork and window sills.



## Are there other sources of lead?

- Occupations and hobbies that use or remove lead
- Some folk medicines and cosmetics
- Consumer products--some toys, children's jewelry, pottery

For more information on consumer products that contain lead go to: [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/recalls](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/recalls)

## How can I find out if my child has too much lead?

A blood test is the only way to find out if your child has too much lead.

The blood test may be done by a simple fingerstick. If the results show too much lead, a blood test done from the vein must be done to confirm that the lead level is too high.

## When should my child be tested for lead?

- Every child should be tested at 12 months of age and again at 24 months. Some high risk children may need to be tested earlier (at 6 months of age) and more often until age 6.
- Children aged 3 to 5 years who have never had a blood test should be screened.
- If at any time you or your family are exposed to lead, get a blood test.

*Note: New Jersey law (PL 1995, c328) requires physicians to test children under age six years for lead.*

### Remember...

Most children with too much lead in their bodies do not look or act sick!

The most important prevention and treatment for lead poisoning is to reduce the amount of lead your child is exposed to every day!

## Where can I get my child tested for lead?

Your child's doctor or local health care center should be able to test for lead during routine checkups.

Your local health department can help you arrange for a blood test.

## What do the test results mean?

**Blood lead levels under 10ug/dL:**

Most children and adults have blood test results under 10 ug/dL. It is important to keep blood levels as low as possible.

**Blood lead levels between 10 and 19 ug/dL:**

These results are higher than average. Your child will need to be retested. Your local health department can check your home and all the places where your child spends time for lead sources.

**Blood lead levels 20 ug/dL or higher:**

These results need careful follow up. Keep your appointments with your doctor or health care center for repeat blood tests. Your local health department will check your home and all the places where your child spends time for lead sources.

ug/dL means micrograms per deciliter