



## Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body. Because lead poisoning often occurs with no obvious symptoms, it frequently goes unrecognized. Lead poisoning can be preventable. The key is stopping children from coming into contact with lead.

### Lower your child's risk of lead poisoning by:

- Washing their hands frequently
- Keeping your home clean
- Getting your child tested
- Following up with doctors as needed
- Making good food choices

### Frequent handwashing

Lead dust may be swallowed when children put objects (keys, paint chips, etc.) or their fingers into their mouths. Always have children wash their hands and face before eating, drinking and sleeping, and after play. Also encourage them not to put their hands into their mouths. Wash children's toys, bottles and pacifiers often.



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH &  
SENIOR SERVICES**

**Lead Poisoning Prevention**

**Health.Mo.Gov/lead**  
**573-751-6102**

If you have questions or need more information about lead poisoning and prevention, contact your local health department, physician or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

# Lead Poisoning: Tips for Families



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF  
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## Keep your home clean and lead-safe

Homes built before 1978 may contain lead paint. A child may eat the chips when this paint is flaking or chipping. Even if the paint is not chipping, the dust created by the friction of opening windows and doors produces enough lead for a child to ingest.

### Tips to follow:

- Remove dirt and dust from floors, windowsills and play areas with warm water and all-purpose cleaner.
- Use a hazardous-waste-certified HEPA vacuum to clean carpet and rugs.
- Keep play areas clean and keep children from chewing on painted surfaces like windowsills.
- Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys and stuffed animals regularly.
- Remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from the soil.



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## Eating nutritious foods

The food that your child eats – how often and the overall pattern – can make a difference in how much lead gets into your child's blood. Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs.

*Serve foods that are a good source of calcium, iron and vitamin C because they can help your child's body absorb less lead.*

### Calcium-rich foods

- Reduced-fat milk and yogurt
- Cheese and cottage cheese
- Reduced-fat pudding and custard
- Greens, spinach and rhubarb
- Navy, great northern and baked beans

### Vitamin C-rich foods

- Oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, strawberries and cantaloupe
- Juices high in Vitamin C
- Tomatoes, bell peppers, greens, kale and broccoli

### Iron-rich foods

- Lean meats, fish, chicken and eggs
- Dried fruits
- Beans and spinach
- Iron-fortified cereals



## Children under the age of 6 are the greatest risk for lead poisoning

A simple blood test is the only way to know if a child has an elevated blood lead level. Children should be tested every year at their 1, 2 and 3 well-child check. Ask your doctor or health care provider to test your child!



## Renovate, repair and painting information

If your home was built before 1978 and you are thinking of having renovations, repairs, or painting (RRP), the hired contractor will need to be RRP certified through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if he or she disturbs more than 6 square feet on the interior or 20 square feet on the exterior. The April 2010 EPA regulation now requires lead safe work practices on all projects that impact painted surfaces on homes built prior to 1978.

If you choose to do the work yourself, please refer to the EPA pamphlet Renovate Right for guidance in completing work safely.

**To locate an RRP-certified contractor, call  
800-424-LEAD (5324)**

**To locate a licensed lead abatement  
professional, call  
573-526-5873**