

**For more information contact:**

# **What Your Child's Blood Lead Level Means**

**OR**

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# **And How You Can Reduce It**

## **Be Alert...Lead Can Hurt!**

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## What are the health risks?



Lead has no useful purpose in the body. The damage from an elevated blood lead level depends on the amount of lead in your child and how long it has been there. Lead can damage the brain and nerves, cause hearing loss, anemia, slowed growth and behavior problems. Lowered IQ and behavior problems have been associated with blood lead levels as low as 10 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ). A blood lead level of  $70\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  is considered a medical emergency and your child may be hospitalized.

***Children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years are at greatest risk for lead poisoning. Have your child tested for lead on a regular basis.***

## How does lead enter your child's body?

It does not take much lead to poison a child. Paint sold before 1978, and used either inside or outside the home, may contain lead. When this paint is flaking or chipping, a child may eat the chips because they have a sweet taste. Even if paint is not chipping, the dust created by opening and closing windows and doors contains enough lead to poison a child. Lead dust may be swallowed when objects (toys, food, etc.) or your child's fingers are put in his/her mouth.



## What can I do to lower my child's lead level?

**Frequent handwashing** - Children are most often poisoned by swallowing dust, dirt or paint chips that contain lead. The dust and dirt is on their hands when they eat and put their hands in their mouths. Always have children wash their hands and face before eating, drinking and sleeping, and encourage them not to put their hands in their mouths.

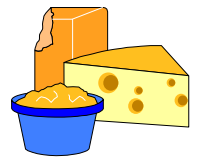


**Wet clean/shampoo often** - Dust and dirt containing lead can be removed by wet cleaning floors, window sills,



cabinets and other places children play. Wet-clean using warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead. Rinse with clean water. To remove lead from carpets, wet-shampoo often.

**Eat right** - To reduce the intake of lead, eat small, frequent meals that are high in iron and calcium and low in fat. Foods such as milk, cheese, ice cream, eggs, chicken, beans and whole grain bread will provide plenty of these minerals and prevent lead from being absorbed in the child. You can consult your health care provider about vitamin and mineral supplements for your child.



**Follow-up** - It's important to have your child's lead level checked often. Children between 6 months and 6 years are at greatest risk for lead poisoning.

