

Learn to Protect Your Child From Being Poisoned



It's all about paint—old paint.
Old paint can **poison** your child because it can contain lead.



Cracking, peeling, chipping, flaking paint in and around your home poses a danger to your child.

READ THIS PACKET CAREFULLY

It shows you specific steps you can take to help protect your child from lead poisoning.

YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR CHILD THROUGH:



1 EDUCATION

Knowing what to look for and who to contact can help



2 HOUSEKEEPING

How you clean up can help



3 DIET

What your child eats can help

YOU CAN help protect your child from lead poisoning

Lead is the problem:

Before we knew how harmful lead could be, it was used in paint, gasoline, water pipes, and many other products. Now that we know the dangers of lead, the use of lead in house paint and plumbing materials has been banned, and leaded gasoline is being phased out. That's the good news.

Unfortunately, because these items once contained lead, lead can be present in your home or apartment in levels that can make your child very sick. It's called lead poisoning, and it's a big problem in Chicago because the majority of the housing in Chicago was built prior to 1978, before the use of lead paint in homes was banned.

Many homes still have lead paint surfaces and lead in the pipes, which present a real danger for lead poisoning. Swallowing lead paint chips is the most common cause of lead poisoning, but breathing dust from lead-based paint can also make your child sick, even though this dust cannot be easily seen.



Who's at risk:

Every child under the age of six must be protected from lead poisoning. While anyone can get lead poisoning, babies and very small children are particularly at risk because they put things in their mouths and their small bodies absorb lead more easily. If you are pregnant, avoid exposing yourself to lead. Lead can pass through your body and harm your unborn baby.

The effects:

Lead poisoning is an extremely serious condition. Brain damage and mental retardation, hearing loss, behavioral problems and damage to a child's kidneys and stomach are just some of the effects of lead poisoning. Exposure to high levels of lead causes seizures, unconsciousness, and even death.

What to look for:

If your child is always tired, can't ever seem to sit still, is grouchy, has an unusual amount of headaches and trouble sleeping at night, he or she should be tested. Other early signs to watch out for include loss of appetite, weight loss, and constipation.



How to protect your child from lead poisoning

You may have lead around your building without knowing it because you can't see, taste or smell lead. Even the dust from defective paint is dangerous. The good news is there are easy things you can do to help protect your child.

1 Testing is **EXTREMELY** important.

Get your children tested for lead poisoning regularly, even if they seem healthy. Early treatment of lead poisoning is very important in order to limit the injuries that can result. **The Chicago Department of Public**



Health's guidelines recommend that children be tested at a minimum at the following ages: 9, 15 and 24 months and then

annually through age 6 (if past test results are at 10 ug/dL or above). Also, if any past test result is above 10 ug/dL, your child should be tested soon after moving into any residence built before 1978. A list of agencies that provide free blood screening, the test that determines whether your child has lead poisoning, is included in this packet.

2 **Act quickly – if you suspect your child is poisoned.**

If you have a child who has tested with an elevated blood lead level of 20 ug/dL or has been tested on two occasions with elevated blood-levels of 15-19 ug/dL, in addition to seeking proper medical care, immediately call the Chicago Department of Public Health and CHA to request a lead inspection of the unit. Early detection and treatment are extremely important to limit the damage that can occur from lead poisoning.

3 **Paint is the BIGGEST problem.**

Paint that is cracking, peeling, chipping or flaking is extremely dangerous. Children can eat these pieces of paint or breathe the dust from the paint and get poisoned. Also, make sure your child does not chew on ANYTHING covered with paint.

4 **Make sure your landlord lives up to his responsibilities.**

If you see any chipping, peeling, cracking or flaking paint in your home, call your landlord immediately to have the defective paint corrected. You should also advise CHA of any defective paint. **Do NOT try to remove lead-based paint yourself. Experts must remove lead paint.** Make sure your landlord hires a person who has special training and is licensed for correcting lead paint problems to remove the lead from your home. The person must know how to do this work safely and have the proper equipment to clean up thoroughly.

Be sure your landlord or the contractor is using safe work practices when painting, remodeling or renovating your house or apartment. This includes working wet, removing or covering your furniture and belongings from the work area, covering the floors with plastic, and properly and thoroughly cleaning up.

Your landlord is responsible for notifying you of any repairs to be made related to lead paint or paint removal and when the repairs are completed.

5 Watch where and what your child plays with.

Most children are poisoned by lead dust that gets on their hands and then in their mouths. **Wash your child's hands, bottles, toys, pacifiers, and other things that he or she puts in his or her mouth regularly.**

Do not let your child play in bare soil. Soil also can be contaminated by flaking and peeling lead-based paint.

6 Clean up safely.

Clean up often, and buy a wet mop or cloth to clean floors, window sills, mini blinds, furniture, and other surfaces. Pay particular attention to dusty and dirty areas, and be sure to rinse sponges and mops thoroughly after each use.

! IMPORTANT: CHA's HQS Procedure

If you see chipping, peeling, cracking or flaking paint, do not wait. Please contact your landlord immediately and also request an inspection from CHA.

Even if you do not request an inspection, CHA will conduct a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection before you move into any new unit leased under the Housing Choice Voucher Program and at least once a year thereafter. This inspection includes a visual assessment of any deteriorated paint violations, such as chipping, peeling, cracking or flaking paint. CHA will then notify both the tenant and landlord.

7 Be aware of other sources of lead poisoning.

Lead paint, dust and soil are the most common sources of lead, but other ways that children can get sick from lead include:

- Food or liquid stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery or porcelain can become contaminated with lead.
- Hobbies, such as making pottery, stained glass or refinishing furniture, can involve lead.
- Folk remedies may contain lead, such as "Greta" and "Azarcon" used to treat an upset stomach or "pay loo ah" used to treat a rash or fever.
- Painted toys, household furniture and outdoor furniture may have lead. Do not let children chew on painted toys or furniture, such as cribs or playpens.
- Children get exposed to lead when their parents bring home lead dust on their clothes, shoes, hair or skin.
- Some imported, non-glossy, vinyl mini-blinds can be a lead hazard. Sunlight and heat can break down the blinds, possibly releasing lead-contaminated dust. Look for products with labels that say "new formulation," "non-lead formula," "no lead added," or "new non-lead vinyl formulation."



Make sure your child eats right

The only truly effective way to keep your child safe from lead poisoning is to safely remove all lead sources from the child's environment. However, the way you prepare meals and the food you serve can help protect your child from lead poisoning.

1 Clear out the lead from plumbing and pipes.

Avoid cooking food in water that is contaminated by lead. **ALWAYS run the cold water at least 10-30 seconds before using it for cooking or drinking.**

This helps clear the lead from the plumbing and pipes. **Never use hot water for cooking or preparing formula.**

2 Do NOT store foods in open cans or pottery.

Lead-glazed ceramic ware, pottery and crystal can transfer lead to foods.

3 Serve healthy low-fat foods.

Children with good diets absorb less lead. Make sure your children eat healthy, low fat foods, high in iron, calcium and vitamin C. Diets should emphasize:

Foods rich in iron:

Fish, tuna, dried fruit (raisins, dates, prunes), beans, lean meats or poultry (hamburger, beef, pork, chicken, fish-tuna), baked potatoes, greens (collard, kale, spinach, beet greens), iron fortified cereals, nuts, sunflower seeds, eggs, wheat germ or peanut butter.

Foods rich with calcium:

Dairy products such as low-fat milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, pancakes, custard, pudding and muffins.

Foods rich with vitamin C:

Cantaloupe, oranges, sweet potatoes, lemons, strawberries, grapefruit and limes.

4 Reduce or avoid fried foods.

It's always best to broil, bake or boil food. Greasy and fried foods keep lead in your child's system.

5 Wash Your Child's Hands.

Many children get lead poisoning from putting their hands in their mouth after playing around lead dust or paint. **Always wash your child's hands before each meal or snack** to remove dirt and dust and help protect your child.



Housekeeping

Get the lead out of your house

Making sure your house is free of dust and dirt is another way to protect your child from lead poisoning.

1 Clean up paint chips IMMEDIATELY.

Never allow any paint chips or dust from window sills, window frames, walls and other surfaces to lie around your home. Be sure to clean up these critical areas regularly, using a mop or sponge with warm water and any all-purpose cleaner such as Dawn dishwashing liquid that contains trisodium phosphate or a cleaner made especially for lead.

2 Thoroughly and completely clean tools.

Rinse sponges, rags and mop heads after each use, to prevent transferring lead residue to other parts of your home.

3 Work wet and smart.

Keeping dust and paint chips wet keeps them from becoming airborne and spreading contamination.

4 Keep your children's play area clean.

Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys and stuffed animals regularly.

5 Do not track in lead from outside.

Clean or remove shoes before entering your home.

The Chicago Housing Choice Voucher Program
P.O. Box 1406
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1406
(312) 935-2600
TTY: (312) 461-0079
Web site: www.thecha.org

Web Sites

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD):
www.hud.gov/lea/

Illinois Department of Public Health:
www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/ehhome.htm

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):
www.epa.gov/lead

Lead Professionals listing:
www.leadlisting.com

Chicago Health Providers:
www.chicagolead.org

Cook County Lead Program:
www.ccdphlead.org

Community-Based Health Centers

The following community-based health centers are affiliated with the Chicago Department of Public Health and provide lead screening services. (They may charge for children not enrolled in Medicaid or Kidcare.)

Circle Family Care
4909 W. Division
Telephone: (773) 921-8100

Englewood
641 W. 63rd Street
Telephone: (312) 747-7831

Komed Health Clinic
4259 S. Berkeley
Telephone: (773) 268-7600

Lakeview Neighborhood Health Center
2849 N. Clark
Telephone: (773) 528-1188
(Must be a member of Lakeview Neighborhood Health Center)

Lawndale Christian Health Center
3860 W. Ogden
Telephone: (773) 521-5006

Lower West Side
1713 S. Ashland
Telephone: (312) 746-5157

Mile Square Health Center
2045 W. Washington
Telephone: (312) 996-2000

Roseland
200 E. 115th Street
Telephone: (312) 747-9500

South Lawndale (Maternal/Child Clinic)
3059 W. 26th Street
Telephone: (312) 747-0066

South Chicago (Maternal/Child Clinic)
2938 E. 89th Street
Telephone: (312) 747-5285

West Town City
2418 W. Division
Telephone: (312) 744-0943

Uptown
845 W. Wilson
Telephone: (312) 744-1938

