



- LEAD POISONING - CHECKING YOUR FAMILY AND HOME FOR LEAD

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

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

Checking your family for lead involves a simple blood test that can detect high levels of lead.

- Consult your doctor for advice on testing your children.
- 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.
- Blood tests are important for children at ages 1 and 2 and other family members who have been exposed to high levels of lead.
- It only takes a small blood sample to tell if your child has lead poisoning.
- The test is often free at local health clinics.
- Lead levels are measured in micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$). If your child's level is $10 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or higher, it is too high and you need to find out how lead is getting into their bodies.
- You can get your home checked 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 the National Lead Information Center for a list of contacts in your area. You can find the NLIC online at www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.htm.
- 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.
- For testing of paint samples and drinking water, call your local health department.
- For a packet of materials or questions about lead, call the National Lead Information Center, toll-free, (800) 424-LEAD
- For information on lead in drinking water, call the EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline: (800) 426-4791 or visit the website at www.epa.gov/safewater.
- Contact HUD about tenants' rights and other housing issues at (800) HUDS-FHA or online at www.hud.gov.
- The Home *A* Syst handbook (www.uwex.edu/homeasyst), gives additional information on lead in and around the home as well as other healthy home topics.

When in doubt, check it out!

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