

Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure

Lead is a naturally occurring metal with properties toxic to humans. Children, especially those under the age of 6, are most vulnerable to its toxic effects. Inhaling or ingesting lead can lead to serious health conditions or adverse effects.¹




Health Conditions

- Stomach Cramps
- Poor Appetite
- Vomiting
- Irritability

Adverse Effects

- Damage to Brain and nervous system
- Slowed Growth and Development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

 **There is no safe blood lead level, even the smallest amount of lead can be harmful.**

Where can lead be found?

Lead can be found where children live, play, and learn.

Although the use of lead in products has been greatly reduced, it can still be found in some products we use today. Some common sources of lead are:

- Homes built before 1978.
- Workplaces or hobbies that expose people to lead, such as roadwork, shipbuilding, and pottery.
- Toys, cosmetics, or products imported from countries that do not have restrictions on lead use.
- Drinking water that has flown through lead pipes.



FUN FACT

Nearly **1/3** of occupied houses in South Carolina were built before 1978!


How can you reduce your child's exposure to lead?

Cleaning is a great method to reduce your exposure to lead at home

Lead can accumulate in dust and soil and cause harm to both your health and the environment. When cleaning you should:

- Wet wash surfaces often to clean up lead dust.
- Use a high efficiency particulate air filter (HEPA) vacuum.
- If you or someone you live with works in a place where lead is present, wash their laundry separate from your regular wash.
- Wash toys, bottles, and pacifiers frequently with soap and water.



 **Always wear latex or rubber gloves when cleaning.**

Is your child at risk?

A simple blood test can diagnose lead poisoning.



In 2022, 5% of the 50,000 children tested for lead in South Carolina had an elevated blood lead level. A blood lead test should be conducted at 12 and 24 months or at least before the age of 6. If you are unsure of your child's lead risk, contact your healthcare provider to have your child screened.



To learn more about childhood lead poisoning visit: <https://dph.sc.gov/professionals/public-health-data/sc-environmental-public-health-tracking/tracking-childhood-lead>

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/symptoms-complications/index.html>