



Get the Lead Out
Facts About

Sources of Childhood Lead Poisoning

Exposure to lead can cause a child to have learning disabilities, problems with paying attention and behavioral problems.

Young children, through oral behaviors and hand contamination, are commonly exposed to lead by ingestion. Children ages 2 years and younger are the highest priority for assessment and testing.

The most common sources are –

- ◆ Lead contaminated dust that adheres to hands, toys, food or other objects young children put in their mouth
 - Scraping of exterior lead-paint surfaces in the past may cause lead contamination of the soil. Lead in soil does not deteriorate or wash away, but is a permanent hazard.
 - Leaded gasoline used in the past may have contaminated soil. Lead can be tracked in on shoes or by pets and can contaminate hands during play or gardening.
- ◆ Ingestion of paint chips from homes built before 1978 that may contain lead paint
 - Children are commonly exposed at windows and porches where there is deteriorating lead paint. Children eating lead-paint chips can ingest a large amount of lead very quickly.
 - The risk of having lead in paint in homes built before 1978 is:
 - Pre-1940: 68 percent
 - 1940 – 1959: 43 percent
 - 1960 – 1978: 8 percent

Other sources of possible exposure risk are -

- Eating foods from cans with lead seams imported from outside the United States
- Eating foods from imported or antique glazed pottery which may contain lead in the glaze
- Drinking water from plumbing that contains lead pipes, lead solder or a holding tank containing lead
- Chewing on toys, keys, keychains, necklaces and toy jewelry that can contain small amounts of lead
- Consuming foods or medicines, especially home remedies, imported from other countries
 - Lozeena - food coloring from Iraq
 - Ayurvedic – herbal medicine product from India
 - Surma or kohl - cosmetic applied to eyelids in Asian countries
 - Azarcon or greta - treatment for intestinal blockage (90 percent lead) from Mexico
 - Sindoor – powdered red lead used during Hindu marriage ceremony
- Middle Eastern folk remedies:
 - Farouk for teething
 - Bint al zahab for colic
 - Sindoor