

What I Can Do?

- Have your child tested for lead.
- If your house was built before 1978, have your paint tested for lead.
- Wash your child's hands and toys often.
- Wear gloves and use soap and water to clean floors, window sills and other surfaces regularly.
- Have your child eat foods high in iron, calcium, vitamin C, and low in fats.
- If your work involves lead, wash up and change your clothes before coming home.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- Local health department
- Utah Department of Health, Office of Epidemiology: (801) 538-6191
<http://health.utah.gov/els/epidemiology/>
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: (800) 424-LEAD, <http://www.epa.gov/lead>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm>



This Publication was supported by Grant No. US7/CCU818465-01 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.



Utah Department of Health
Office of Epidemiology
PO Box 142104
288 North 1460 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-2104



Utah Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program



Office of Epidemiology
March 2004

What is Lead Poisoning?

Lead poisoning is one of the most common and preventable childhood health problems in the United States today. Children become lead poisoned when there is lead in their body by breathing leaded dust or putting things containing lead in their mouth.

Possible Sources of Lead

- **Lead-based paint:** chipping or peeling paint from homes or buildings built before 1978
- **Work:** lead may be brought home from the work place (remodeling, radiator repair, welding, painting, auto repair, smelting, mining, renovation, construction, printing, etc.)
- **Water:** home's plumbing has lead pipes or copper pipes with lead solder joints
- **Food:** stored in opened cans or kept in ceramic, lead crystal or pewter containers
- **Products:** vinyl mini-blinds, metal candle wicks, crayons, older toys, cosmetics, news papers or magazines - contact the manufacturer or check the package to see if the product contains lead
- **Soil:** may be contaminated with peeling or chipping paint from the outside of homes or buildings
- **Hobbies:** ceramics, refinishing furniture, gun reloading, target practice, fishing weights, stained glass
- **Home or folk remedies:** greta, azarcon, pay-loo-ah, kohl, ghasard, etc.



How Children are Affected by Lead

Many lead-poisoned children do not show any signs of the disease. If gone undetected at **lower levels**, lead may cause:

- damage to the nervous system, kidneys, and the brain
- hearing damage
- learning disabilities
- behavioral problems
- decreased muscle and bone growth



at **higher levels** lead may cause:

- seizures
- unconsciousness
- death

If **symptoms** do occur, they may be mistaken for other illnesses, which include:

- loss of appetite/weight
- stomach ache
- irritability
- more tired than usual
- constipation
- headache
- frequent vomiting



Is My Child Lead Poisoned?

A **blood lead test** is the only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead.

- A blood lead test could be done at the doctors office, local health department, clinic or hospital.
- A sample of blood is carefully taken from the child's finger or from the child's arm. The result of the blood lead test is reported within a week.

Children need to be tested at **1 and 2 years of age**, and **under age 6** if the child has not had a blood lead test before, or if the child is suspected of having been exposed to lead.

A blood lead test is covered by most insurance and is encouraged and paid for by Medicaid.



Children 6 months through 5 years of age and a pregnant woman's unborn child are considered to be at a **higher risk** for lead poisoning because:

- children tend to put **everything** in their mouths
- their **growing bodies** absorb lead more easily than adults
- children's developing **brain** and **nervous system** are more sensitive to lead



Lead is also harmful to adults. Adults should have a blood lead test if there is possible exposure.