

Methods of Lead Protection

- Wash your child's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Clean up any peeling or chipping paint, and don't let children play with paint chips.
- Take down old, vinyl mini-blinds that may contain lead and buy blinds that are labeled as "lead-free".
- Do not store food in glazed pottery from foreign countries.
- Mop floors regularly.
- Take off shoes when going into the house.
- Keep dust and dirt off of floors, window sills and other surfaces.
- Use very cold tap water for drinking and cooking.
- Make sure children eat four of six small meals a day. Check your home for lead hazard.
- Test the dirt in child play areas for lead.
- Talk to your landlord about fixing peeling and chipping paint.
- Avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling by wetting work areas.
- Do not use a power sander, open-flame torch, heat gun above 1,100oF, dry scraper or dry sandpaper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.
- Cover dirt with mulch or other plants especially next to your home to keep children away from lead paint chips or flakes that may fall from painted outside walls.



Checklist for possible problem areas

Check the box to determine possible problems areas:

- Look for chipping, peeling and deteriorating paint on fences, porches, the exterior of the house, and other buildings on the property. Pay special attention to windows and doors—the repeated motion of opening and closing windows and doors can damage paint creating lead paint chips and dust.
- Examine swing sets and other play equipment. Some swing sets and other play equipment may be covered with chipping or flaking lead-based paint.
- Check the condition of old wall paper—it may have been made with dyes that contain lead.
- Look for chipping, peeling and deteriorating paint inside the home especially on window wells and sills, doors, trim, baseboards, railings, walls, floors and ceilings. Pay special attention to window wells and sills, and doors—these areas often deteriorating lead-based paint and lead dust.
- Lead-based paint also may have been used on old toys and furniture—check the condition of the paint on these items.
- Check the condition of radiators and other painted surfaces in bathrooms. Inadequate ventilation and continuous exposure to moisture can cause paint to chip, peel or flake.



What can you do about lead in your home?

Don't remove lead paint yourself.

Hire a trained and certified professional to remove the lead.

Contact DEH for lead testing, if you suspect lead in your home.

For further information
Please contact DEH at
The following addresses
below

Grand Cayman

Department of Environmental Health
P.O. Box 1820 GT
CI Environmental Center
Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands
KY1-1109
Tel: 345-949-6696
Fax: 345-949-4503

Cayman Brac & Little Cayman

Department of Environmental Health
P.O. Box 212 Stake Bay
Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands
KY2-2101
Tel: 345-948-2321
Fax: 345-948-2543

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Lead Poisoning: What you need to know



Cayman Islands
Department of
Environmental Health
(DEH)

What is lead poisoning?

Lead is a very strong poison that has no known function in the human body. (A *poison is a substance that can cause damage, illness or death to an individual when a sufficient quantity is absorbed in the body.*)

Sources of Lead

Houses built before 1978 which was painted with lead based paint. Paint manufactured before 1950 may have high levels of lead.

Who is most affected?

Young children are most susceptible to the toxic effects of lead. Lead interferes with the development and functioning of almost all body organs, particularly the kidneys, red blood cells, and central nervous system. Long-term exposure to even low levels of lead can cause irreversible damage. Because the symptoms of lead poisoning are similar to those of flus or viruses, it is important that children be tested for lead. Since their bodies are not fully developed, lead poisoning can cause:

- Brain, liver, and kidney damage
- Slowed development
- Learning or behavior problems
- Lowered intellect (or IQ)
- Hearing loss
- Restlessness



Keep Your Child Away From Lead

- Peeling lead paint is the most common cause of lead poisoning in young children.
- Children with lead poisoning may develop health, learning and behavioral problems.
- Young children ages 6 months to 3 years are most at risk.
- Lead dust from peeling paint can land on window sills, floors and toys. When children play and put their hands and toys in their month, they may swallow lead dust.

Children can also be exposed to lead from:

- Items from other countries, such as
- Health remedies.
- Candies, spices and other foods.
- Cosmetics.
- Metal or painted toys and jewelry
- Clay pots and dishes used for cooking, serving or storing food.
- Clothes and tools used by household members in jobs or hobbies that involve lead, such as construction.

Symptoms of lead poisoning in children

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Headaches | Stomachaches |
| • Nausea | Loss of appetite |
| • Tiredness, and | Irritability. |
| • Constipation | Weight loss |
| • Hyperactivity | Difficulty sleeping |
| • Hearing problems | |

Symptoms of lead poisoning in adults

In adults, exposure to lead affects primarily the peripheral nervous system and can cause impairment of hearing, vision, and muscle coordination. Lead also damages the blood, kidneys, heart and reproductive system.

Symptoms of Lead poisoning in Adults

- Irritability
- Aggressive behavior
- Low appetite and energy
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Reduced sensations
- Loss of previous developmental skills (in young children)
- Anemia
- Constipation
- Abdominal pain and cramping (usually the first sign of a high, toxic dose of lead poison)
- Very high levels may cause vomiting, staggering gait, muscle weakness, seizures, or coma

Testing?

A blood test is the only sure way to detect lead poisoning.



Most children have no symptoms. When children do have symptoms, the symptoms are often similar to common childhood complaints such as headaches, irritability, tiredness, lack of appetite and stomach aches. Because these symptoms are not specific, parents and physicians may not suspect lead poisoning.

Steps to prevent lead exposure in an individual child should be taken when a child's blood lead level is 15 micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$). If a child's blood level is 20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or higher, the child should

What are the main sources of lead?

Lead hazards can be found in several places inside and outside of your home, including:

- **Old Paint:** lead-based paint, most often found in homes built before 1978, is unsafe if it peels, chips, cracks, or chalks.
- Since babies and young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths, they are likely to swallow lead dust or chew paint chips.
- **Lead Dust:** This harmful, invisible dust is created when windows, doors, edge of stairs, rail, or other surfaces with lead-based paint wear down from repeated friction, such as opening or closing windows or doors.
- Children are most often poisoned by consuming lead dust through normal hand-to-mouth activity.
- Pregnant women who breathe in high levels of lead dust can transmit lead to their unborn children, causing serious damage.
- **Soil:** Soil surrounding homes may be contaminated from chipping or flaking exterior lead-based paint.

○ While playing outside, especially on bare soil, children can accidentally swallow the contaminated soil, or track it indoors on carpets and floors where they can come into contact with it.

- **Important:** Lead dust can spread throughout a home when walls or painted surfaces are sanded, scraped, or torn down. Only trained professionals should safely remove old paint surfaces in a home.

○ Children and pregnant women should not be in the house while repairs are under way.

