

Patient Information Sheet

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<b>What is lead?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead is a soft, blue-gray metal that is mined from the earth's crust.</li><li>• Lead has been used for many industrial purposes for centuries.</li><li>• Lead was widely used in paint and gasoline in the U.S. until the 1970's.</li><li>• Lead does not break down over time.</li><li>• Lead is present in all parts of the environment, including inside homes.</li></ul>
<b>How are people exposed to lead?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most people, especially children, who suffer from lead poisoning are exposed through lead-contaminated household dust or soil that gets into their mouths.</li><li>• Homes that were built before 1978 are likely to have paint that contains lead. If this paint is disturbed, rubbed, peels or chips, people living in the house may come in contact with lead.</li><li>• Some people may be exposed to lead through working with or near lead.</li><li>• Other routes of exposure include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Eating or drinking water, food, or alcohol that contains lead.</li><li>◦ Practicing religious and cultural rituals that include lead.</li><li>◦ Mouthing or swallowing other lead-containing products, including some imported jewelry.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>What are the health effects of lead?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More commonly, lower levels of lead in children over time may lead to reduced IQ, slow learning, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or behavioral issues.</li><li>• Lead also affects other parts of the body including the kidneys, heart, and reproductive system,</li><li>• <u>Pregnant women</u> should know that the developing fetus is very sensitive to the effects of lead exposure.</li><li>• The effects of lead may be seen right away or may not be noticed for many years.</li></ul>
<b>How can I prevent exposure to lead?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure that your home is lead safe. If your house was built before 1978 and you cannot afford to have all the lead-based paint eliminated from it, please follow these tips:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Make sure that the paint is not chipping or peeling. Pay special attention to the paint around windows, porches, and doors.</li><li>◦ Use lead-safe work practices when doing any remodeling work that causes paint to chip, peel or become dust. (for more information, see: <a href="http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/epahudrrmodel.htm">http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/epahudrrmodel.htm</a> (Joint EPA/HUD Renovation Training Curriculum; modules and resources.)</li><li>◦ Wet mop floors and window sills <u>at least weekly</u> to control dust.</li><li>◦ Keep children out of areas in the yard with bare soil.</li><li>◦ Wash children's hands and toys with soap and water <u>often</u>.</li></ul></li></ul>

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- Run cold water for one to two minutes before drinking or cooking with it.
  - Do not use glazed ceramics, home remedies, cosmetics, or leaded-crystal glassware unless you know that they are lead safe.
  - If you live near an industry, mine, or waste site that may have contaminated the area with lead, be especially careful to avoid exposure to soil.

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**Is there a medical test for lead exposure?**

- Blood samples can be tested for exposure to lead.
- Children should have blood tests at ages one and two.
- Children should also be tested between ages three and six if they are at risk of lead poisoning (see: ).

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**Who can I call to get more information about lead?**

- **The CDC Information Center:** 1-888-422-8737)
- You can also obtain more information about lead from your regional poison control center and your state, county, or local health department.

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**Where can I go for more in-depth information?**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/lead)
  - National Lead Information Center: 1-800-424-LEAD or <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/nlic.htm>
  - National Lead Information Center Clearinghouse Phone: 800-424-LEAD (1-800-424-5323)
  - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Lead Awareness Program <http://www.epa.gov/lead>
  - EPA publication "[Lead in Your Home; A Parent's Reference Guide](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadrev.pdf)": <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadrev.pdf>
  - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) 1-800-311-3435 or [www.cdc.gov/niosh/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): 1-800-321-6742 or [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).
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