

Lead

1. What is lead?

Lead is a metal found in our environment. It can be found naturally in soil, rocks, air, and water. It can also be found due to industrial activities, like making batteries, building materials, and metal products (like cooking and eating utensils). Lead has also been added to some foods and supplements (vitamins).

2. How are you exposed to lead?

You have contact with lead when you:

- Eat lead-based paint chips or peels from homes built before 1978
- Work in a high risk job (like car mechanic or welder) where you touch, breath in, or bring home dust that has lead in it
- Touch dust or soil that has lead in it and then put your fingers in your mouth by mistake
- Drink water or eat candy, food, or spices that have lead in them
- Take herbal or natural supplements that have lead in them
- Use remedies that have lead in them like Greta, Azarcon, pay-loo-ah, Ghasard, Ba-baw-san, or Daw Tway
- Use makeup that has lead in it like Surma and Kohl
- Use pots/dishes that are old, handmade, or not made in the U.S.
- Have a bullet inside of your body

3. How can lead affect your health?

Eating lead or breathing lead dust can cause lead poisoning. This can hurt the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Kids less than 6 years old and pregnant women are at higher risk. In kids, lead poisoning affects their growth, learning, and behavior. In pregnant women, lead poisoning causes high blood pressure, the baby to be born too early (premature birth), or losing the baby (miscarriage).

It may not be possible to reverse damage if the lead level is too high. Signs of lead poisoning may include headaches, nausea, weakness, and trouble eating, sleeping, or paying attention. Most kids who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick.

4. How is lead poisoning tested and treated?

Most of the time, lead poisoning has no symptoms. So, the only way to know is with a blood lead test. If your child is between 6 months to 6 years old, ask your doctor whether to test for lead. Treatment depends on the level of exposure and can range from simply not having contact with the source of lead to taking medicine prescribed by your doctor. There are no known safe levels of lead.



Key Points:

- Lead is a metal that is found in our environment due to nature and industrial activities, such as making batteries.
- Eating lead or breathing lead dust can cause lead poisoning.
- Lead poisoning can hurt the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. It rarely causes symptoms and requires a blood test to confirm.
- Lead poisoning can cause damage even at very low levels.

For more information:

**Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health**
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/lead/index.htm>

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/AreaofInterest/lead.htm>

**California Department of
Public Health**
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CLPPB/Pages/default.aspx>

**Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)**
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>

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5. How can you prevent lead poisoning?

Tip	More Information
Get Tested for Lead	Ask your doctor about a lead test if your child is between 6 months to 6 years old
Eat Healthy Foods	<p>Avoid foods high in fat and give these healthy foods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron-rich foods: Beans, cereals with iron, lean meat, fish, tofu • Calcium-rich foods: Milk, yogurt, cheese, dark-green vegetables, and canned salmon • Vitamin C: Oranges, tomatoes, limes, bell peppers, broccoli, berries • Water: Drinking fluids help remove lead from the body
Keep Your Home's Painted Surfaces in Good Repair	<p>Don't let paint start to chip or peel in homes built before 1978</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never dry sand/scrape painted surfaces so you don't make and spread lead dust • Use lead safe work practices for any repairs of painted surfaces • If the property owner won't fix peeling paint hazards, call 1-888-700-9995
Keep Your Home Clean and Dust-Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wet mop floors instead of dry sweeping to stop the spread of dust • Wipe window sills and other surfaces often with a wet cloth • Use a vacuum that has a HEPA filter or use an allergen filter bag

Steps to lower risk of lead exposure

Tips for communities near the Exide Technologies battery recycling plant in Vernon, CA

Wash hands and toys often

- Lower hand-to-mouth transfer of lead dust or soil by washing your children's hands after playing outside, before eating, and at bedtime. Wash their toys often.

Do not let kids play on bare soil, when possible

- Playing on grass or sand can lower exposure to bare soils that may have lead. Watch your kids play outside and avoid contact with bare soil.

Take off shoes before coming into your home

- This helps to lower the chance of bringing lead into your home. Also note that pets may bring lead into the home from the soil outside.
- Wash lead tainted clothes separately.

Request a free blood lead test, call the Blood Lead Screening Hotline at 844-888-2290

- Free blood lead testing is available to any person who lives, works, or goes to school in the communities near Exide. All results are confidential. If you have more lead-related questions, call: **1-800-LA-4-LEAD (1-800-524-5323)**.