



## Basic Fact Sheet on Lead Poisoning

### A LITTLE HISTORY

Paint manufacturers used to add lead to paint to create more durable, longer lasting house paint. In the 1950's most paint manufactures stopped adding lead to paint, and in 1978 adding lead to paint was banned. Therefore, if you live in a home built before 1978, it may contain lead paint. Leaded paint becomes a problem when the paint becomes non-intact. This means the paint may chip, flake, or rub off the surface on which it was painted. When this happens, tiny particles of leaded dust get onto the home environment and attach to items such as carpet, furniture and toys.

### HOW LEAD AFFECTS CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN

Children get lead in their bloodstream by either eating it or breathing it in. In children under six, lead exposure may cause, among other things, learning disabilities, lowered intelligence, aggressive behavior, hearing damage, nervous system and kidney damage, and behavior problems. Pregnant women may transfer lead to the developing fetus. It is important to remember that signs and symptoms of lead poisoning may not be present until the individual, child or adult, is severely poisoned.

### HOW DOES LEAD ENTER INTO A CHILD OR ADULT'S BODY?

Lead commonly enters a child's body through the mouth or nose (eating or breathing). Children under the age of 3 commonly put objects in their mouths, and if the object has lead on it, the lead can get swallowed by that child. Adults can eat or breathe lead particles if they work around lead or complete remodeling projects of older homes and do not use lead safe work practices.

### HOW DOES ONE MINIMIZE LEAD EXPOSURE AROUND THE HOME?

There are simple safety measures that can reduce exposure to lead. Be sure to wash your hands and the hands of children frequently, and especially before eating or drinking. Make sure to never dry dust; always dust using a wet cloth or paper towel and make sure to throw the cloth or paper towel away after using. If remodeling a home built before 1978, use lead safe work practices. "Lead Paint Safety: A Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work is available at the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadsafetybk.pdf>.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD

Additional information about lead is available at [www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead), [www.cdc.gov/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/lead), [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), and by calling the National Lead Information Center at 1.800.424.LEAD or contact CLEARCorps at:

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