

Childhood Lead Poisoning

What causes lead poisoning?

Many things in our everyday lives put infants, children and adults in danger of lead poisoning.

Lead-based paint was used in many homes built before 1978. The older the home, the more likely that windows, cupboards, doors porches, and outdoor surfaces contain lead-based paint.

Children are most often poisoned by lead dust and lead paint in older homes. Lead dust can come from repairing areas with lead paint, opening and closing windows, and through normal wear and tear of painted areas. Lead dust settles to the floor and gets on children's hands and toys. It enters their bodies when they put their hands or toys into their mouths.

We now realize just how dangerous lead is. There are things you can do to keep your children safe from lead poisoning.

How can I tell if my child has been lead poisoned?

A lead-poisoned child may seem healthy or have any of the following signs:

- Learning and behavior problems
- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Hearing problems
- Weight loss
- Hyperactivity
- Irritability

When should my child be tested for lead poisoning?

Many children have blood lead tests as part of their regular care by a doctor or clinic. These tests are important for children who live or spend time in older houses which may have lead paint.

Children should be tested for lead poisoning at one and two years of age or more often depending on their contact with sources of lead.

What else can I do to protect my child?

- Wash your child's hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.
- Test the soil your child plays in.
- Make sure children eat healthy foods and snacks such as lean meat, chicken, turkey and fish, milk, low-fat cheese, yogurt, broccoli, collard and turnip greens, oranges or grapefruits, orange or grapefruit juice, potatoes, tomatoes and peppers. Low-fat milk and foods are best for children over the age of two.
- Have your home checked for lead hazards.
- Keep floors, window sills and other surfaces dust and dirt free.
- Take off shoes when entering the house.

- Talk to your landlord about fixing peeling or chipping paint.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating.
- Don't use a power sander, open flame torch, heat gun above 1,100 degrees Fahrenheit, dry scraper, or sandpaper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.
- Use very cold tap water for drinking and cooking.
- Learn how to remove lead-based paint safely.

What can I do to make a lead-safe home?

These steps will provide a short term solution for lead in your home. For long term solutions, contact Michigan Department of Community Health, Lead Hazard Remediation Program at (517) 335-9390.

1. Use the proper cleaner
 2.
 - Any household detergent
 - Cleaners made just for cleaning lead
 - You can use a spray bottle or bucket to hold cleaning solution
3. Put on gloves
 4.
 - If you don't have rubber gloves, wash your hands when you are done cleaning
5. Pick up all paint chips first
 6.
 - Window areas often have lots of paint chips
 - Seal chips in a plastic bag and throw away
 - Do not use your vacuum! Many local health departments have HEPA vacuums to loan
7. Use disposable paper towels
 8.
 - Don't use dish cloths or sponges to clean
9. Keep water clean
 10.
 - Use a new paper towel to clean each area
 - Never put dirty towels into the wash water
 - Put the used towels in a plastic bag and throw into the trash
11. Pour wash water down the toilet
 12.
 - Avoid pouring it down the sink
13. Rinse after cleaning
 14.
 - Use clean water and towels for rinsing each area
15. Repeat steps 1 - 7 often
 16.
 - Do these steps when dust and dirt appear

Note: Areas that should be cleaned include windows, doors, floors, porches, stairs and child play areas.

Important!! Do not vacuum lead hazards that could spread lead dust into the air you breathe.

How can I determine if my child should be tested?

- Does the child now or in the recent past live in or often visit a house built before 1950 with peeling or chipping paint? This could include a day care, preschool, or home of a relative.
- Does the child now or in the recent past live in or often visit a house built before 1978 that has been remodeled within the last year?
- Does the child have a brother or sister (or playmate) with lead poisoning?
- Does the child live with an adult whose job or hobby involves lead?
- Does the child's family use any home remedies that may contain lead?

If you answered no to every question, this means your child is at LOW RISK for lead poisoning.

If you answered yes or don't know to any of these questions, this means your child is at HIGH RISK for lead poisoning. The only way to know for sure is to have your child tested. Talk to your child's doctor to arrange for a blood test. Show the doctor this questionnaire so he or she knows why your child is at risk.

How do I get my child tested for lead poisoning?

Ask your family doctor or Pediatrician to do a blood lead test on your child at 12 months and 24 months of age. Medicaid insurance will pay for the cost of the test if your child is enrolled. If you have private insurance, coverage may vary. The cost of a blood lead test which is sent to the Michigan Department of Community Health Lead Laboratory for analysis is \$11.

If your child needs a blood lead test, but your insurance will not pay for it, or you cannot afford to pay for it, the fee can be waived with permission from the laboratory.

If the family doctor or Pediatrician does not perform blood lead tests in their office, he or she may refer you to a laboratory or the local health department to have the blood lead test.

If the first blood lead test is done with a capillary sample (finger prick), and the analysis of the sample shows an elevated blood lead level, **it will be very important for you to bring your child back for a venous blood sample to confirm the results.**

Call your local health department or the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (517) 335-8885 if you have further questions about getting your child tested for lead poisoning.

What Are Home Lead Test Kits?

Home lead test kits are intended mainly for consumer use to determine if lead is present in paint and other solid materials, including miniblinds, toys, crystalware and pottery. Some look like mini chemistry kits in which liquids are dropped onto surfaces to be tested, while other kits use indicator sticks that are rubbed onto surfaces to be tested. These tests use a mixture of chemicals that react showing a color change in the presence of lead, that can be observed by the person testing the material in question.

Home lead test kits can be purchased at local home improvement and hardware stores. Prices vary. These kits can also be found through the Internet by searching on the following key words: lead test kits. The manufacturers' directions should be followed when using lead test kits.

Home lead test kits are designed to provide a simple, inexpensive and immediate answer as to whether lead is present in the tested material. The result is either positive or negative. It is a good first check to find out if lead is present. However, the test kit has its drawbacks. A positive test could be triggered by several other metals, leading to an inaccurate test result. The test will not determine if the tested material is considered to be hazardous to children's health because it does not show how much lead is in the paint. In addition, lead paint is not hazardous if it is in good condition with no peeling, cracking or flaking. These kits cannot be used to check water for lead content. If you doubt the reliability of the test kits, the best choice is to send the material to a commercial laboratory, or hire a certified lead professional.

The State of Michigan does not endorse home lead test kits to be used in Lead Inspections or Risk Assessments performed by certified lead professionals.

What Are Lead Dust Wipes?

Lead dust wipes are used to determine if lead is present in dust with levels high enough to poison young children. This procedure, if done properly, can be very useful and is an accurate way to determine hazardous lead levels in dust. In order to collect the most accurate dust sample, there is a procedure that should be followed by homeowners and renters. The collection procedure can be obtained from the Michigan Department of Community Health, Lead Laboratory by calling (517)335-8244.

The procedure involves the use of latex gloves to prevent contamination of the wipe; a wipe that looks like a small disposable hand cloth; tape to border the area to be tested; a ruler for measuring this area; and a container to hold the wipe to be sent to a lab for testing.

Dust wipe samples taken by private citizens should be sent to a commercial laboratory that participates in a national quality assurance program called the Environmental Lead Proficiency Analytical Testing (ELPAT) Program. Laboratories may be found in the yellow pages of the phone book under Testing Laboratories; on the Internet with a search on the key words of environmental lead testing laboratories; or by calling the Lead Hazard Remediation Program toll-free at (866)691-LEAD.

Once a lab is found, contact the American Industrial Hygiene Association at (703)849-8888 to verify if it participates in the ELPAT Program. Certified lead professionals in

Michigan are required to use laboratories that have passed a more rigorous program—the National Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program. These accepted labs can also be used by private citizens, and are listed on this website under Information about Lead Hazard Control for Homeowners and Rental Property Owners Section.

Private citizens can take dust wipes of their homes for the sole purpose of determining whether their home contains lead dust. Doing this for pay or some other compensation is illegal according to Michigan law. It then becomes an activity for a certified Lead Inspector or Risk Assessor.

Lead testing done by a homeowner or a lead professional must be disclosed to future home buyers and/or tenants as per Michigan's Property Sellers Disclosure Act and the EPA/HUD National Real Estate Notification and Disclosure Rule.

Michigan Zip Codes High Risk For Lead Poisoning

www.michigan.gov/documents/ziplist_11222_7.pdf