

Is your child at risk of lead poisoning?

What is lead and how its impact on children?

Nearly a third of the world's children – up to 800 million children – are affected by lead poisoning. Lead is a highly poisonous element that is responsible for nearly 1.5 per cent of annual global deaths – almost as many deaths as from HIV and AIDS, and more than from malaria.

Lead affects a child's developing brain, causing decreased intelligence, behavioral disorders and learning problems which can reduce potential earnings in adulthood. It also affects almost every organ in a child's body, including the heart, lungs and kidneys.

Lead affects children more than adults

The potential negative effects of lead are far greater for children than for adults. A child's brain grows fastest during the early years of childhood, when thousands of neural connections are made every second. Lead exposure can substantially interfere with this complex, important and delicate process.

Infants and young children absorb about 4-5 times more of the lead that enters their bodies than do adults.

The risk of ingesting lead-contaminated soils and dust is also higher, due to the way children play outdoors and because they are closer to the ground, especially when they are learning to walk and crawl.

Lead exposure is hard to detect

One challenge in detecting childhood lead poisoning is that it is hard to observe and recognize. At low to moderate levels of exposure, there are typically no symptoms or physical signs apparent to a clinician. At moderate to high levels of exposure, children may complain of a variety of non-specific symptoms, such as headaches, insomnia, abdominal pain or discomfort, poor attention or loss of appetite.

The impacts of lead poisoning may result in indications of clumsiness, agitation or decreased activity and drowsiness, which can progress to vomiting, convulsions and coma in severe cases.

Is your child at risk of lead poisoning?

Check for lead in and around your home:



Paint: Avoid children's toys or playground on painted walls / ledges (often lead-based paints used to paint walls and doors, old-fashioned), clean shredded paint safely.

House dust: Remove dust from items with a damp cloth. Do not allow the child to scratch window sills or other surfaces.

Visible dirt: Hide visible dirt where your baby is playing.

Vinyl Mini-Blinds: Replace Old Vinyl Mini-Blinds and Do Not Let Your Child Chew



Plumbing Materials: It is likely that lead is present in tap water if plumbing materials, including welding or bonding sections, contain lead. Reduce the potential impact of lead by running tap water until you feel cold water, only use water for cooking, drinking or other needs.

Well water: The only way to find out if well water contains lead is to do a water test.



Foods and spices: Avoid imported foods and brightly colored spices that may contain lead, such as shapulin and turmeric.

Sweets: Avoid defective sweets

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Dishes, utensils: Avoid the use of worn, discounted or market-bought antique utensils, as well as the use of crystal material and handmade utensils.

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Toys: Check toys for flaky paints and wash them often! Old or vinyl toys often contain lead, avoid buying used toys and giving them to a child to play with.

Jewelry: Do not allow your child to play with jewelry, especially if they are likely to get it in their mouth.



Fishing attributes and bullets (Lead): Do not allow children to play with fishing attributes and lead;

Lead Welding: Avoid your child engaging in activities that involve the use of lead welding, such as welding, glass breaking, or jewelry making.



Traditional makeup and remedies: These products often contain lead: Surma, Azarkon, Greta. Talk to your doctor before using this or any other traditional make-up or remedies (e.g., light colored powders, traditional Chinese remedies).