



Just the Facts

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Know How You Can Protect Your Child From Lead Poisoning



Presently U.S. Army installations are in the process of developing lead teams to manage lead programs and minimize the risk from lead on their installations. To further minimize that risk, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (Provisional) [USACHPPM (Prov)] has developed the following recommendations. If you live offpost, these recommendations may be appropriate. You may also contact your local public health department.

What is lead poisoning?

It is a term for a variety of health effects related to various blood-lead levels. It is caused by the ingestion or inhalation of lead. Children who appear healthy may have lead poisoning; children under the age of 6 are particularly susceptible.

How does lead affect children?

Lead poisoning can—

- ◆ impair learning
- ◆ interfere with the ability to think
- ◆ decrease the ability to hear
- ◆ stunt growth
- ◆ cause behavioral disorders
- ◆ decrease attention span
- ◆ cause anemia.

Three Steps to Lead Poisoning Prevention

Step 1: Have Your Child Tested or Screened

Know your child's blood-lead level. A simple blood test can indicate the lead level in your child's system. Contact your healthcare provider, pediatrician, well child clinic, or Preventive Medicine Service for additional information.

Step 2: Know Potential Sources of Lead

◆ **Paint.** Lead-based paint (LBP), usually found in homes built prior to 1980, can be a major source of lead. Paint chips and lead dust are generated from chalking or deteriorating paint, or from the abrasive action of sliding surfaces, such as painted windows and doors.

◆ **Soil.** Soil can be contaminated with lead chips and dust from exterior paint or other lead sources. Soil near roads may be high in lead from gasoline exhaust.

◆ **Water.** Drinking water may contain lead from water pipes, pipe fittings, or lead solder in plumbing.

◆ **Food.** Food may be contaminated with lead if stored or cooked in poorly glazed pottery that contains lead, if stored in lead crystal, or if stored in cans with lead seams or solder.

◆ **Work or Hobbies.** Lead-bearing dust is generated from work involving battery operations, rifle-range operations, the reloading of ammunition, or hobbies such as stained glass, ceramics, and target practice.

- ◆ **Military Housing Occupants, Homeowners and Renters**
- ◆ **Information/Guidance**
- ◆ **Reducing Lead Exposure**

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (Provisional)

USACHPPM (Prov) Lead Team

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Step 3: Manage Lead Sources

Lead in Paint

- ◆ Contact your local housing office or Preventive Medicine Service for testing information if you live onpost. Installation family quarters are part of a program to identify and manage sources of LBP.
- ◆ Have your house tested for LBP if you live offpost and your house was built before 1980, or you suspect lead is present. Both onpost and offpost dwellers can use the following management techniques:
 - ◆ Routinely wash smooth surfaces (walls, floors, window ledges, toys) with a high phosphate soap (powdered dishwasher detergent). Use a phosphate-free detergent formulated to remove lead where these soaps are prohibited. Wear impermeable gloves, or use personal protection to avoid skin irritation.
 - ◆ Vacuum carpets with a vacuum cleaner specially designed with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Keep areas where your children play as clean and dust-free as possible. (NOTE: **Do not retrofit a regular household vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.** Be sure to use a specially designed HEPA vacuum cleaner. Attempts to use a regular household vacuum to manage lead-bearing dust may aggravate the problem by making lead dust airborne.)

If anyone in your household has an elevated blood-lead level, identify the source and follow the management techniques above to reduce exposure.

Lead in Soil

- ◆ Plant grass, ground cover, shrubs or flowers, or use mulch to cover bare soil.
- ◆ Have the sand in your child's sandbox tested for lead, or replace it with sand that is lead free.

Lead in Drinking Water

- ◆ Have your water tested if you live offpost and you suspect your plumbing contains lead or lead solder, or if anyone living in your house has an elevated blood-lead level.
- ◆ Draw drinking and cooking water only from the cold water tap. If water has not been used for more than 2 hours, allow it to run for 30-60 seconds before drawing it for drinking or cooking.

Lead Leaching into Food

- ◆ Do not store or cook food in pottery or ceramic ware that may be poorly glazed. (Be suspicious of any pottery purchased overseas.)
- ◆ Do not store foods or beverages in lead crystal for a prolonged time.
- ◆ Do not store food in open cans.

Exposure to Lead During Work or Hobbies

- ◆ Ensure practice of established workplace sanitation and hygiene standards.
- ◆ Change or wash clothing worn when working with lead before entering your home.
- ◆ Wash clothes worn when working with lead separately from family laundry.

Healthful Hints for Reducing Lead Exposure:

- ◆ Feed your child a well-balanced diet high in calcium, iron and vitamin C. These nutrients decrease the body's absorption rate of lead. Avoid foods high in fat, which increase the body's lead absorption rate.
- ◆ Teach your children to wash their hands before meals, nap, and bedtime. Most lead exposures in children are due to ingesting lead-containing dust by hand-to-mouth contact.
- ◆ Wash pacifiers and bottles after they fall on the floor. Wash toys and stuffed animals regularly.