

What is lead?

Lead is a kind of metal that has been used for thousands of years to make many products. Being exposed to too much lead can cause serious health problems.

Lead is found in:

- the old paint on:
 - the inside and outside of homes
 - on windows, doors and walls
 - old toys and furniture
- bare soil or dust
- clothing or on skin from a job site or hobby
- the lead dust on pets who have been outdoors
- even your drinking water
- toys

Lead can be found in products like:

- home remedies
- ceramics, pottery
- crystal glassware

The most common way lead enters a child is through their mouth.

- putting their hands in their mouths after:
 - crawling on the floor
 - playing in bare soil
- touching or chewing window sills with old, chipping paint
- licking or sucking on contaminated toys
- playing with pets that may be covered with lead dust from outside.

Protect your child from lead paint:

- Remove deteriorating paint*
- Wash hands, toys, and baby bottles often with soap and water
- Don't let children pick at walls or trim with peeling or chipping paint
- Use furniture or other items to keep children away from chipping or peeling paint
- Always pick up any loose paint chips

- If you rent, notify the landlord of any chipping or peeling paint immediately
- Repair chipping or peeling paint immediately. Do not paint over.
- Wet wash areas of chipping or peeling paint at least once a week
- Don't use paint with lead in it in the house
- Check your children's toys to make sure they are "lead safe." Find a listing of toy recalls at www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/category/toy.html

Possible effects of Lead Poisoning:

- Lowered Intelligence
- Decreased Coordination
- Shortened Attention Span
- Aggressive Behavior
- Reading and Other Disabilities

Even at low levels, lead poisoning affects a child's ability to learn and function. Some effects from exposure may include:

- Brain damage
- Loss of IQ
- Headaches
- Learning Difficulties
- Hyperactivity
- Hearing problems
- Irritability & Vomiting

Benton County Human Services, Public Health is conducting lead screening for families on WIC. If you are not on WIC, ask your primary physician for a lead screening.

A test result that shows a blood level **higher than 10**, is cause for follow up. Depending on your child's results, they may need to be retested (10-14) or your home may be tested for lead (higher than 14).

If your child's blood test comes back high, we will contact you for follow-up testing.

The ONLY WAY to know if your child has been exposed to lead is to have a blood lead test done.