# Keep your family safe from: . . .

# lead in the HOME

## What is lead?

Lead is a highly toxic metal found in the earth's crust. Because of the abundance, low cost and useful properties of lead and lead compounds, they've long been used in products such as paint, ceramics, pipes, solder, gasoline, batteries and cosmetics. Since 1980, though, federal and state laws have helped reduce or eliminate lead in consumer products and in the workplace.

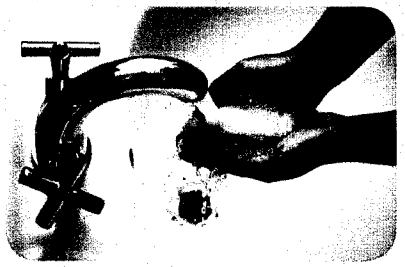
## Why is lead a health problem?

High lead levels in the blood can cause problems such as lack of coordination, convulsions and coma. Even relatively low lead levels can cause changes in children's mental development and behavior.

In the United States people are most commonly exposed to lead through lead-based paints in older homes, contaminated soil, household dust, drinking water, lead crystal dishes and glasses, and lead-glazed pottery.

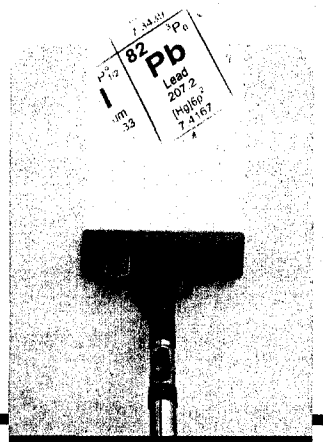
Homes built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint. If it flakes or chips, children may eat the paint chips because they taste sweet. Even if the paint isn't chipping, the dust created by the friction of opening and closing lead-painted windows and doors can poison children.

## Action steps for creating a healthy home



Wash your own hands and have your children wash their hands often, at least before eating, drinking and sleeping.

Remove dirt and dust with lead in it by wet-cleaning floors, windowsills and places where children play. Use warm water, an all-purpose cleaner and disposable cleaning cloths. Rinse with clean water.




Use a HEPA vacuum to clean carpets and rugs, because HEPA vacuums trap lead particles.

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to test your children for lead poisoning with a simple blood test.

Offer your children four to six small meals a day, because children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than those with full stomachs do.

## Learn More

To learn more about lead and how to keep your family safe from lead exposure, check out these resources:

- Online: http://www.mi.gov/leadsafe
- Lead hotline: 866-691-5323

## References

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