Is Your Child Safe From Lead Poisoning?

What causes lead poisoning?

There are many places in a home that can put babies and children in danger of lead poisoning.

Lead paint is the #1 cause of lead poisoning in Michigan and is often found in homes built before 1978. The older the home, the more likely that painted surfaces like windows, cupboards, doors and porches will contain lead paint.

Lead poisoning occurs most often when children come in contact with lead in the air, in dust and in lead paint. Lead can also be found in soil, drinking water if supplied by lead pipes, certain home remedies, and used in some hobbies and occupations.

How can I tell if my child has lead poisoning?

Talk to your doctor about testing your child's blood for lead poisoning.

When should my child receive a blood lead test?

All Michigan children must be tested at 12 months and 24 months of age, or by 72 months of age (age 6) if there is no record of a previous test, and at other ages depending on lead exposure risks.

Symptoms of lead poisoning can be silent—and hard to recognize. Preventing lead poisoning before it happens is the best way to keep your family safe. **Take this quiz to see if your child may be at risk.**

Does the child live in or regularly visit a **home built before 1978**? (Note: recent or planned renovations can greatly increase risk of lead exposure in homes built before 1978.)

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Does the child live in or regularly visit a home that had a **water test with high lead levels**?

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Does the child have a **sibling or friend who has an elevated blood lead level**?

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Does the child come into contact with an adult whose **job or hobby** involves exposure to lead (e.g., smelting, indoor shooting/firing ranges, pottery, stained glass, refinishing old furniture)?

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Does the child's caregiver use **home remedies** that may contain lead (e.g. ba-baw-san, daw tway, greta, azarcon, balguti kesaria, ghasard)?

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

Does the child's caregiver have reason to believe the child is **at risk for lead exposure** (e.g., exhibiting pica behavior, developmental delays)?

Yes **No** **Don't Know**

If you answered **Yes** or **Don't Know** to any of these questions, **talk to your doctor about testing your child for lead poisoning.**

Make Every Day Lead Safe

Safe Cleaning

Use these steps to help keep your home clean and reduce your child's risk of lead exposure. Use these tips to clean your windows, doors, floors, porches, stairs and child play areas.

Put on rubber gloves. If you do not have rubber gloves, wash your hands well after cleaning.

Use the right cleaners and supplies you can throw away. Use soapy cleaners or products made to remove lead dust.

Remove paint chips first. Window areas and porches often have peeling paint and lead dust. Pick up paint chips you can see and throw them away in a plastic bag.

Always wet-mop floors and window sills. Do not use a broom to sweep lead dust. Throw away cloths after wiping each area. Replace mop water frequently.

Don't use a vacuum unless it is a HEPA vacuum. A regular vacuum will spread lead dust into the air you breathe. Some health departments have HEPA vacuums available to borrow.

Rinse after cleaning. Use clean water and a new mop head or fresh paper towels to wipe away suds.

Always empty wash water down a toilet.

Repeat these steps weekly, or when dirt and dust appear on floors, porches, window wells, window sills, stairs and children's play areas.

For Homes with Lead Pipes

If you use a water filter, be sure it meets NSF/ANSI 53 standards for lead reduction.

Keep your water moving by taking a shower, running a load of laundry, flushing the toilet and washing dishes. Run your water until it is cold before using it for drinking, cooking and making baby formula.

Test. Consider contacting your local water authority to have your water tested.

Additional Lead Safety Practices

- Wash hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.
- Always take off shoes before going into the house.
- Watch your child's diet. Foods high in calcium and iron help keep lead from being absorbed by a child's body.
- Avoid using power sanders, open-flame torches, heat guns, dry scrapers and dry sandpaper or heat guns on painted surfaces.
- Paint over peeling or chipping paint.
- Hire a certified lead professional when making updates to your home.
- Always use the safe cleaning methods listed above.

Thinking about remodeling your home? Need advice about identifying and removing lead paint?

Call the MDHHS Home Lead Services Program at 866-691-LEAD.

For more information, visit Michigan.gov/MiLeadSafe or call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 517-335-8885.

MDHHS Michigan Department of Health & Human Services | Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

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