

What is lead poisoning?



Lead poisoning is a health problem, especially for young children. Lead poisoning in children may be associated with:

- Learning and behavior problems.
- Delayed growth and development.

What causes lead poisoning?

Lead paint is the most common cause of childhood lead poisoning. Lead is a poisonous metal that was used in paints many years ago. New York City banned lead paint in 1960, but older buildings may still have lead paint on walls, windows, doors and other surfaces. If paint is peeling or damaged, lead paint chips and dust can spread around the home. Young children can swallow lead dust when they put their hands and toys in their mouths. Even small amounts of lead dust can be dangerous. Lead dust can come from:

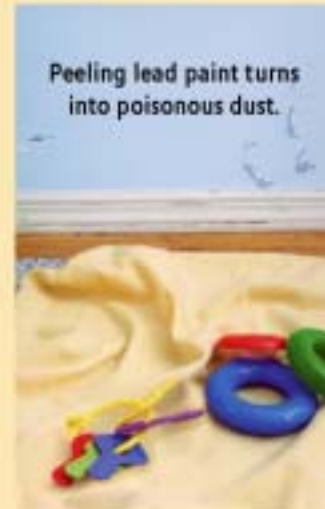


- Peeling or damaged paint.
- Painted windows and doors that stick or rub together when opened and closed.
- Unsafe home repairs and paint jobs.

Call 311 if your landlord fails to correct peeling or damaged paint.

Why are young children at risk?

Young children often put their hands and toys in their mouths. They crawl and play on the floor and can swallow lead dust from normal hand-to-mouth activities. Children's bodies are growing quickly and are more affected by lead.



Children can also be exposed to lead from:

Imported food, pottery and cosmetics, and traditional medicines that contain lead. Water in buildings with old plumbing. Soil in play areas that contains lead. Family members who are exposed to lead from jobs or hobbies. Air, food, and water when visiting countries where lead is not controlled.

Keep children away from peeling paint and other lead sources.

Are pregnant women and newborn babies also at risk?

Unborn babies are in danger if their mothers have lead poisoning during pregnancy. If you are pregnant, don't

eat food and/or use items that may contain lead. Talk to your doctor about lead poisoning, and get tested if you have been exposed to lead.

How can I find out if my child has lead poisoning?

Children who have lead poisoning usually do not look or feel sick. The only way to know is by a blood lead test. Whenever your child sees a doctor, ask if she or he needs a lead test. If your child doesn't have a doctor, call 311. Ask the operator where your child can get tested. All children should get a blood lead test when they are 1 year old and 2 years old. At any age if they are exposed to peeling lead paint or other lead sources.

What do the results of my child's blood lead test mean?

The results of the blood lead test tell how much lead is in your child's blood. The lower the blood lead level, the better. No matter what your child's level is, you should do things to keep it as low as possible.



How can I protect my child from lead poisoning?

- Remind the doctor to test your child for lead poisoning at both ages 1 and 2. Ask the doctor about testing older children.
- Report peeling or damaged paint to your landlord. Your landlord must inspect and safely fix peeling paint at no charge to you if a young child lives there. It's the law.
- Keep children away from peeling or damaged paint and home repairs that disturb lead paint.
- Clean floors, windowsills, and dusty places often with wet mops and wet cloths.
- Wash toys, pacifiers, and other items children put in their mouths.
- Wash children's hands often, especially before they eat.
- Use cold tap water for making baby formula, drinking, and cooking. Let the water run for a few minutes before use.
- Do not use items that may contain lead, such as imported pottery, food and cosmetics, and traditional medicines.
- Keep children away from work clothes and tools of family members who do home repairs or other lead work.



Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

The Lead Poisoning Prevention Program of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene provides services to families, health care providers, landlords, and community organizations. These services may include:

- Providing information on lead poisoning prevention.
- Working with families and doctors of children who are lead poisoned.
- Inspecting homes of children with blood lead levels of 15 mcg/dL or more.
- Requiring landlords to safely repair paint hazards found during lead inspections.
- Responding to complaints about unsafe repairs that may create lead dust and debris.

**Talk to your doctor.
Call 311 for more information.
Or visit nyc.gov/health.**



The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor
Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner



Preventing Lead Poisoning

What every parent should know

