

**LEAD**  
poisoning

# Know the Facts

Lead poisoning is caused by swallowing or breathing lead. Children under 6 years old are most at risk. If you are pregnant, lead can harm your baby.

**FACT** Lead can cause learning and behavior problems.

Lead poisoning hurts the brain and nervous system. Some of the effects of lead poisoning may never go away.

Lead in a child's body can:

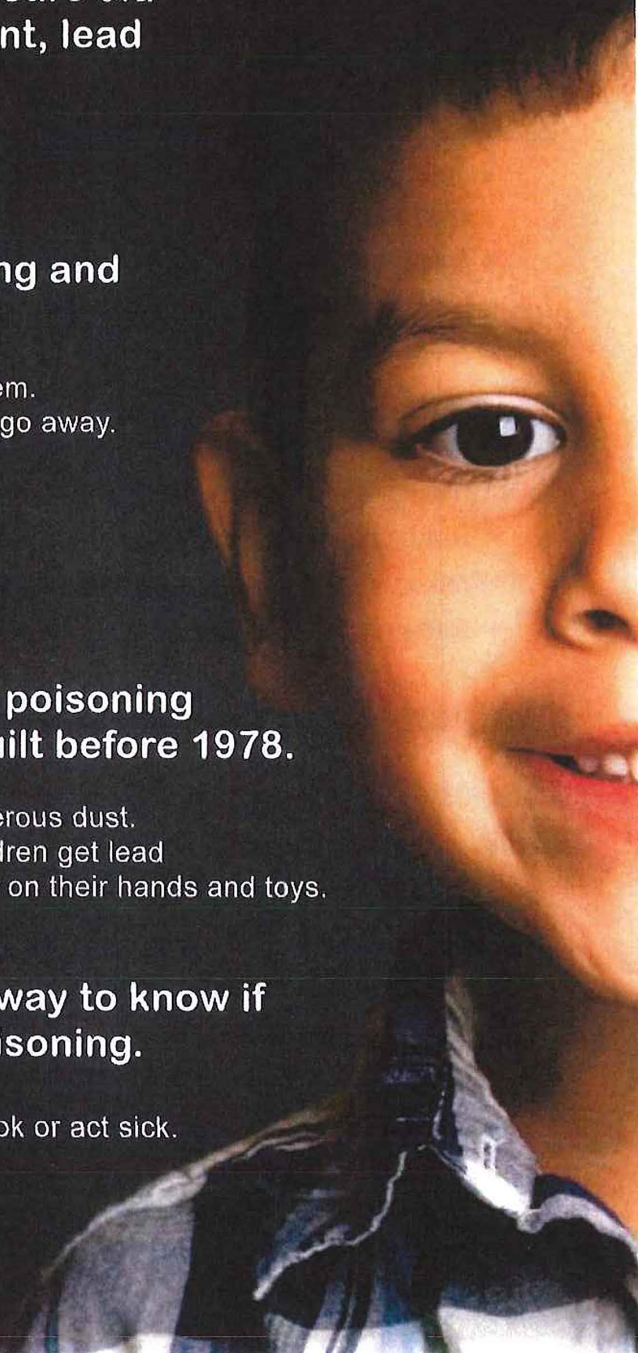
- Slow down growth and development
- Damage hearing and speech
- Make it hard to pay attention and learn

**FACT** Most children get lead poisoning from paint in homes built before 1978.

When old paint cracks and peels, it makes dangerous dust. The dust is so small you cannot see it. Most children get lead poisoning when they breathe or swallow the dust on their hands and toys.

**FACT** A lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning.

Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick. Ask your doctor to test your child for lead.





# Protect Your Family

## 1. Test your home for lead.

- If you live in a home built before 1978, have your home inspected by a licensed lead inspector.
- Contact your local health department for more information.

Sometimes lead comes from things other than paint in your home, such as:

- Candy, toys, glazed pottery, and folk medicine made in other countries
- Work like auto refinishing, construction, and plumbing
- Soil and tap water

## 2. Keep children away from lead paint and dust.

- Use wet paper towels to clean up lead dust. Be sure to clean around windows, play areas, and floors.
- Wash hands and toys often, especially before eating and sleeping. Use soap and water.
- Use contact paper or duct tape to cover chipping or peeling paint.

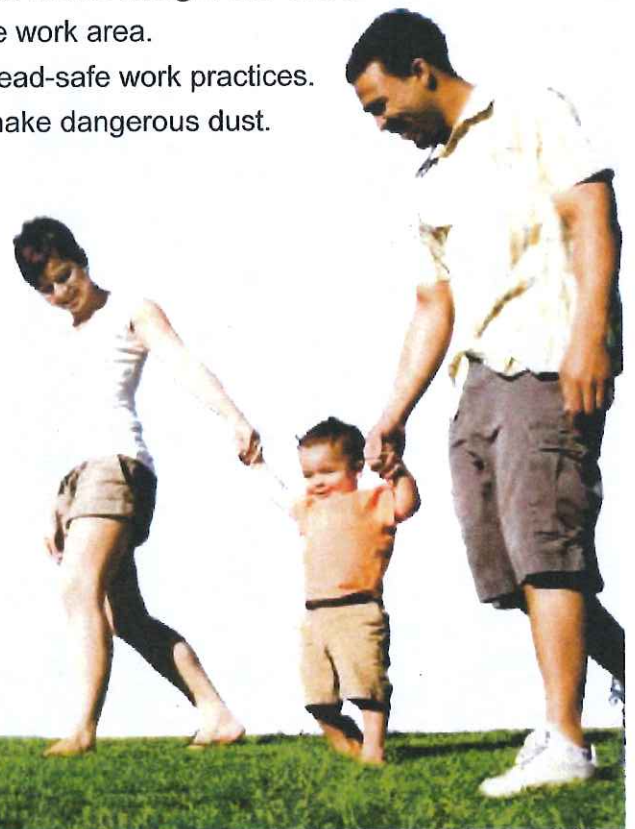
## 3. Renovate safely.

Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous dust.

- Keep children and pregnant women away from the work area.
- Make sure you and/or any workers are trained in lead-safe work practices.
- Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous dust.

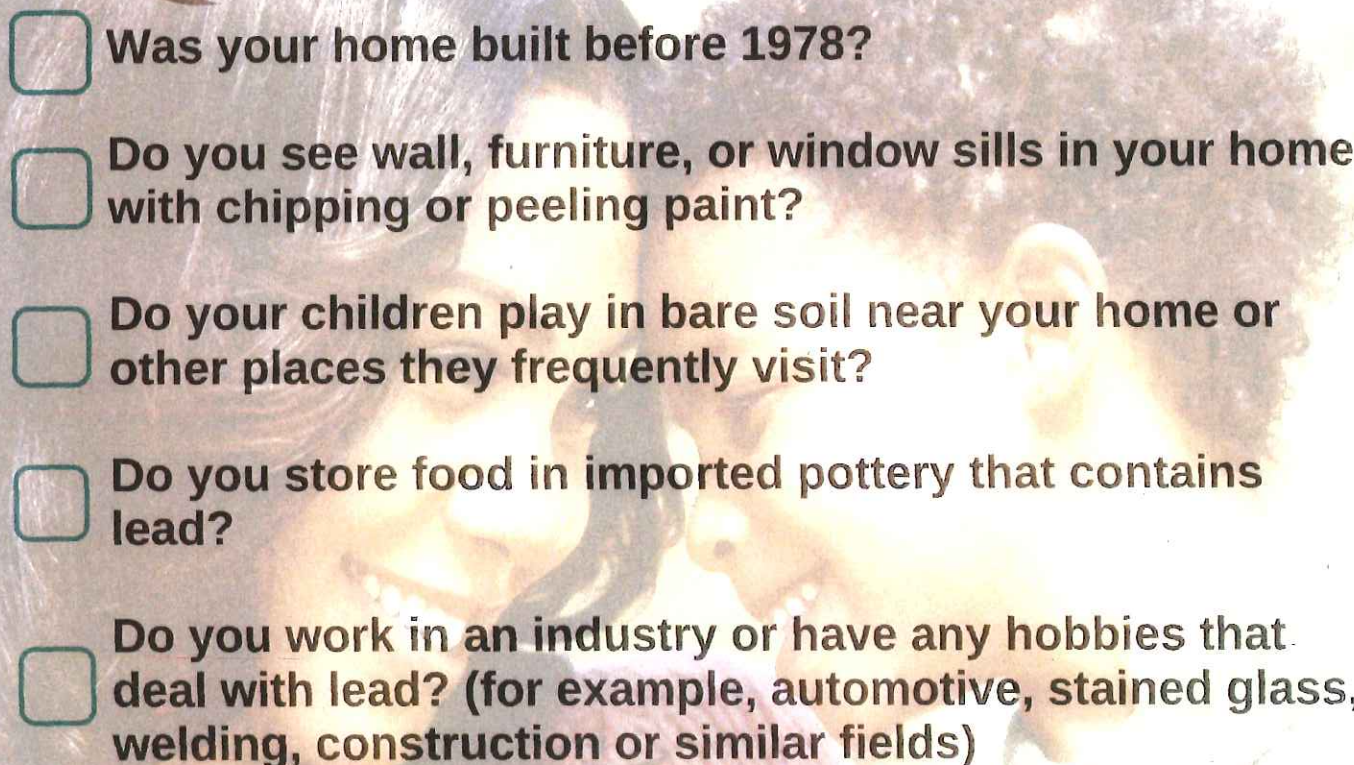
Contact us for more information:

**St. Joseph County Department of Health**  
**227 W. Jefferson Blvd., 8 & 9th Floor**  
**South Bend, IN 46601**  
**(574) 235-9750**  
**[www.sjchd.org](http://www.sjchd.org)**



How do I know if  
my child is at risk  
for lead  
poisoning?

## LEAD POISONING IS 100% PREVENTABLE

- 
- ☐ Was your home built before 1978?
  - ☐ Do you see wall, furniture, or window sills in your home with chipping or peeling paint?
  - ☐ Do your children play in bare soil near your home or other places they frequently visit?
  - ☐ Do you store food in imported pottery that contains lead?
  - ☐ Do you work in an industry or have any hobbies that deal with lead? (for example, automotive, stained glass, welding, construction or similar fields)

If you answered YES to **any** of these questions,  
your child may be at risk!

Have your child tested through their Doctor or  
the St. Joseph County Department of Health.



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(574) 245-6755    [WWW.SJCHD.ORG](http://WWW.SJCHD.ORG)





# LEAD poisoning



## 5 Things you can do to help lower your child's lead level.

If your child has a high lead level, there are things you can do at home to help.

1

### **Make a plan with your doctor.**

Work together with your doctor to find the best treatment for your child. Ask questions if you don't understand something.

#### **You may need to:**

- Go back for a second lead test.
- Test your child for learning and development problems. This test is called a "developmental assessment."

2

### **Find the lead in your home.**

Most children get lead poisoning from lead paint in homes built before 1978. It is important to find and fix lead in your home as soon as possible. Have your home inspected by a licensed lead inspector.

Don't remodel or renovate until your home has been inspected for lead. Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous lead dust.

**3**

### **Clean up lead dust.**

When old paint cracks and peels, it makes lead dust. Lead dust is so small you cannot see it. Children get lead poisoning from swallowing dust on their hands and toys.

- Use wet paper towels to clean up lead dust.
- Clean around windows, play areas, and floors.
- Wash hands and toys often with soap and water. Always wash hands before eating and sleeping.
- Use contact paper or duct tape to cover chipping or peeling paint.

**4**

### **Give your child healthy foods.**

Feed your child healthy foods with calcium, iron, and vitamin C. These foods may help keep lead out of the body.

- Calcium is in milk, yogurt, cheese, and green leafy vegetables like spinach.
- Iron is in lean red meats, beans, peanut butter, and cereals.
- Vitamin C is in oranges, green and red peppers, and juice.

**5**

### **Learn more. Get support.**

Contact your local health department. Trained staff will answer your questions and connect you to other resources in your community.

Dealing with lead poisoning can be stressful. Be sure to ask for support. You may want to talk to other parents who have children with lead poisoning.

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# LEAD SAFE CLEANING

Keep your family safe from lead poisoning

## Why safe cleaning

Lead is a heavy metal and can be toxic to children. Homes older than 1978 are at risk for containing lead based paint. Old paint crumbles over time and turns into invisible dust that clings to hands, toys, objects that children may put in their mouths. Lead may also be found in older toys, keys, pottery, candy or toys from other countries.

## How to clean lead dust

Be sure to clean around windows, baseboards, doors, stairways, and floors daily. Keep children and pregnant women out of the area while you clean. Dust can fly around the room and settle elsewhere if not cleaned properly.

- Wear gloves.
- With all purpose cleaner, spray to reduce dust, and scrub surfaces well.
- Use paper towel to wipe down cleaner. Dry cloths or sponges will only spread the dust. Use disposable wipes if possible (ex. Clorox or baby wipes).
- Place dirty paper towels and paint chips in a plastic bag, close tightly, and throw away.
- Wash your hands after cleaning.

## Daily safety procedures

- Wash hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys frequently.
- Always take shoes off before going into the house (Lead may also be present in soil around your house or on certain job sites).
- Hire certified lead professionals when renovating your home.
- Always use the safe cleaning methods listed above.



**ST. JOSEPH COUNTY**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.