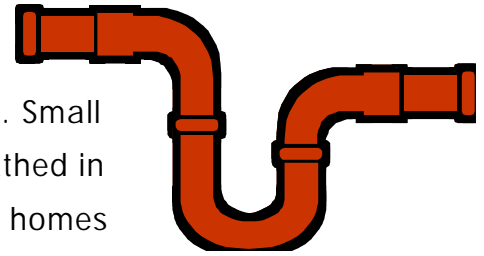


# Lead Poisoning and Your Child



Lead is not always a big chunk of metal that you can see or feel. Small particles of lead can be eaten, absorbed through the skin or breathed in with the air. Lead is contained within many items we find in our homes and neighborhoods. Lead exposure is harmful to people of all ages, but especially to children under six years of age and unborn fetuses. 1 in 9 children in the US has an elevated blood lead level. Lead poisoning can be prevented.

## How can lead harm my child?

- ◆ More than 200 lead poisonings have occurred in children in Arizona each year since 1996. More than 65% of cases involve Hispanic children.
- ◆ Children are more sensitive to lead than adults and absorb more lead due to their frequent hand to mouth behavior.
- ◆ Children need not ingest large quantities of paint to develop lead poisoning. Less than one quarter of a teaspoon a day can have health impacts.
- ◆ Lead harms every organ in the body, particularly the developing brain and central nervous system of young children.
- ◆ Lead remains in the bloodstream for a few weeks, then some is absorbed into the bones where it can collect for a LIFETIME.
- ◆ When eaten, the body mistakes lead for calcium, and the lead weakens the bone.
- ◆ Most of the lead that is absorbed into a child's brain remains there FOREVER.

## What items can contain lead?

Sometimes these items can contain lead. Be especially careful with foreign items.

- ◆ Leaded gasoline and exhaust from cars that burn it.
- ◆ Soil around industrial (especially past smelter activities) or heavy traffic areas.
- ◆ Lead-based paint.
- ◆ Antiques - some contain lead-based paint.
- ◆ Solder in water pipes in newer homes and pipes in older homes.
- ◆ Curtain weights and plastic mini-blinds.
- ◆ Second hand tobacco smoke.
- ◆ Homemade alcohol and remedies such as Greta and Azarcón.
- ◆ Hair dye.
- ◆ Imported crayons, canned foods and ceramics. Many ceramic glazes are lead-based.
- ◆ Fine bone china and crystal.
- ◆ Colored ink in foreign newspapers and food packaging.

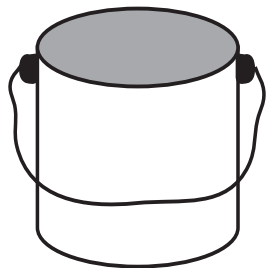
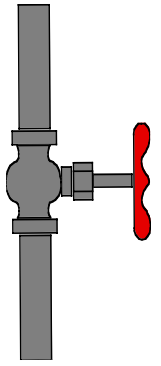


When in doubt, replace items you're unsure about and dispose of them responsibly.



## How can I reduce my family's exposure to lead?

- ◆ Flush water pipes with cold water for 30 seconds before using. The longer water sits in your pipes, the more lead it may contain. Hot water dissolves more lead in pipes than cold.
- ◆ Wash children's hands frequently and especially before eating.
- ◆ Wash children's toys often.
- ◆ Know the age of your house before doing any sanding or work that involves removing paint. Houses constructed before 1978 may contain lead-based paint.
- ◆ Be alert for chipping or flaking paint.



- ◆ Avoid using glazed ceramic ware for eating or drinking.
- ◆ If you work with lead, don't bring it home; shower and change before coming home. Wash your clothes separately from the rest of the family.
- ◆ Be aware of what industries are present in your neighborhood. Be informed about what chemicals are used in their production processes and the potential impacts to you and your family.

## What are the symptoms and effects?

While many cases of lead poisoning do not show symptoms, lack of appetite, vomiting, fatigue and anemia can occur. In children, exposure can result in disabilities, lowered intelligence, hearing deficits, behavioral problems, and nervous system, muscle and brain damage. Extreme cases can result in coma or death.

## Where can I get more information?

If you suspect that your child may have been exposed to lead, you should have his/her blood tested. Call either one of the following if you have questions.

Ramon Estrada  
CASA Program Coordinator  
Child & Family Resources, Inc.  
881-8940

Arizona Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program  
1-800-367-6412

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