

Lead Poisoning: Do I need to worry?

Answer these questions to find out.

Lead Tipsheet #10



March 2014



If you checked any box, ask your child's doctor about a blood test for your child.

If your child is younger than 6 years, check all that are true on this list.

- The place where I live was built before 1950.
- The place where I live was built before 1978, and has had repairs, painting or renovations done recently.
- Someone who lives with me may work with lead.
Examples: house painters, contractors, metal recyclers
- My child has a brother, sister or neighbor who has had lead poisoning.
- My child or I were born in another country.
- My child puts lots of things that are not food in his/her mouth.

What's so bad about lead?

Lead can cause:

- Learning disabilities
- Behavior problems
- Lower intelligence
- Hearing damage
- Language or speech delays

How does lead poisoning happen?

Dust from lead paint in older homes is almost always the cause of lead poisoning.

Lead dust collects on floors and in places where kids put their hands and play with toys. Children, especially those under age 3, often put their hands and toys in their mouths. This makes it very easy for lead dust to get into and damage their growing bodies.

How do I know if my child has lead poisoning?

The only way to tell is to get a blood test. Most kids with lead poisoning don't look or act sick.

What if my child has MaineCare?

MaineCare requires a blood test for lead when children are 1- and 2-years-old. You can ask your child's doctor for a test for lead.

Turn over for ways to keep your child safe from lead.



Protect your family.

- Check this website: maine.gov/healthyhomes
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474** • TTY: Call Maine Relay 711



Maine Center for Disease
Control and Prevention
An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Lead Poisoning

How can I keep my child safe?

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If you checked any boxes on the other side of this sheet, here are some tips to keep your children away from lead.

Check the Paint in Your Home

- ✓ Check painted windows, doors and floors for peeling, flaking or chipping paint. Keep children away from these areas.
- ✓ Tell your landlord about damaged paint.



Keep Things Clean

- ✓ Clean floors, windowsills and tabletops with wet mops or rags once a week.
- ✓ Wash your child's hands before eating or sleeping.
- ✓ Wash toys once a week and keep toys away from areas with chipping paint.

Food, Bottles, Pacifiers

- ✓ Feed your child at a table or in a highchair.
- ✓ Don't let your child eat food that falls on the floor.
- ✓ Wash pacifiers and bottles if they fall on the floor before giving them to your child.



Home Painting or Repair Projects

- ✓ Learn how to control lead dust before you begin any home repair or painting project.
- ✓ Test for lead dust after you finish a project. Order a free test kit: maine.gov/healthyhomes.
- ✓ Hire an "EPA-certified RRP contractor" to do the work. Learn more at epa.gov/lead.

Don't Bring Lead Home from Your Job

- ✓ If you work with lead at your job, change your shoes and clothes right away. Put dirty clothes in their own bag or hamper. Wash work clothes separately from family laundry.
- ✓ Take a shower before touching your child.

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