

PARENTS' GUIDE TO PREVENTING LEAD EXPOSURE

From Flint to Newark, the topic of lead's effects on children has been in the news a lot lately. So, what do parents like you need to know about lead and keeping your family safe?

This guide was created to help you understand:

- where lead might be
- how to prevent your family from being exposed to lead
- what to do if you suspect your family has been exposed to lead



LEAD EXPOSURE

- » Lead can be found in a variety of sources, including old paint, soil, and water.¹
- » It is usually in older homes, schools, and businesses, especially in buildings built before 1978 when lead paint was banned.²
- » In the case of lead in water, higher levels can result from older plumbing and faucets.

Lead is particularly damaging to **pregnant women** and **young children**.³



It's estimated that **24 MILLION HOUSING UNITS** in the United States have deteriorated lead paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated dust. At least **4 MILLION** of those households have children living in them.¹



¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014). Lead. Prevention Tips. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>



PREGNANT WOMEN

- » Lead can lead to miscarriage, premature birth, and low birthweight.



YOUNG CHILDREN

- » Because of typical early childhood behaviors, such as crawling on the floor, teething, and exploring new environments, children are more likely to ingest lead than adults.
- » Lead exposure in children is related to hyperactivity, impulsivity, and attention problems.
- » Because lead stays in the blood stream, preventing exposure to lead is key.



¹Achieving Health and Social Equity Through Housing: Understanding the Impact of Non Energy Benefits in the United States. Retrieved from https://www.greenandhealthyhomes.org/wp-content/uploads/AchievingHealthSocialEquity_final-lo.pdf

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Childhood Lead Poisoning Surveillance Data. "Blood Lead Levels in Children Aged 1–5 Years — United States, 1999–2010," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 5, 2013; 62(13):245-248. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6213a3.htm>

³Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (2017). Lead Toxicity Who Is at Risk of Lead Exposure. Retrieved from <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/csem/csem.asp?csem=34&po=7>

⁴United States Environmental Protection Agency (2017). Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-lead-your-home>

⁵United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2015) Lead in Drinking Water. Retrieved from: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/2002_5_17_lcrmr_guidance_lcmr_lead_public_education_poster_v2.pdf

⁶American Academy of Pediatrics. Detection of Lead Poisoning. Retrieved from: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/lead-exposure/Pages/Detection-of-Lead-Poisoning.aspx>

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» HOW CAN WE PREVENT LEAD EXPOSURE?

The following tips are especially important if you live in a home that was built before 1978 or if you live in a city with a water infrastructure built before 1987.

PREVENTING LEAD EXPOSURE:

- Keep children away from **construction sites** and avoid them if you are pregnant.
- Clean or remove shoes when entering the home.
- Wash hands, pacifiers, and toys in filtered water.
- Ensure children eat **nutritious meals** cooked with filtered water.⁴

PREVENTING LEAD EXPOSURE IN THE HOME:

If you own your home:

- Locate a **certified lead inspector** if you suspect your home may contain lead-based paint.
- **Keep all painted surfaces** clean and dust-free with a mop or sponge, warm water, and general all-purpose cleaner. This is especially important if your house was built before 1978.
- Hire **EPA-certified contractors** to perform any renovations and to remove lead-based paint hazards.

If you are currently a renter:

- Find out if the home you are living in was built before 1978.
- **Encourage your property manager or landlord** to:
 - **Have the property tested for lead**, particularly all units with children under the age of 6.
 - Hire an **EPA-certified contractor** to eliminate any sources of lead-based paint in the home.

To find a certified lead inspector or an EPA certified contractor, contact the Georgia Department of Public Health Environmental Health Section



404-657-6534

PREVENTING LEAD EXPOSURE FROM WATER:

- **Use an NSF-certified filter** – pitcher-style and faucet-mounted filters should be NSF 53 certified. Not all filters are created equal.
- **Remove and replace old faucets, shower heads, etc.**
- **Flush your water** - if your water hasn't been active for a while (like over a holiday weekend, vacation, or summer break from school), let the water run for 15-30 seconds.⁵
- **Use cold water for cooking** – it's considered safer.
- **Drink filtered water on the go.**
- **Avoid DIY test kits** – they can be inaccurate and miss lower lead levels. If you're concerned that your home's water has elevated lead levels, contact a certified lead inspector.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO LEAD?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that **all children be tested for lead exposure** at regular intervals. Georgia Medicaid, PeachCare (CHIP), and private insurers cover lead screenings as part of children's checkups.⁶
- If you are worried your child may have been exposed to lead, **talk to your pediatrician** about a lead screening.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SUSPECT MY CHILD HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO LEAD?

If your child has a positive lead screening:

- Your **pediatrician can provide guidance and refer your child** to case management and early intervention services at the Georgia Department of Public Health.
- After consulting your pediatrician, **talk to your child's teacher** about the potential effects on your child's behavior and learning. Ask about services that might benefit your child.

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