

Lead Poisoning

Has Your Child Been Tested?



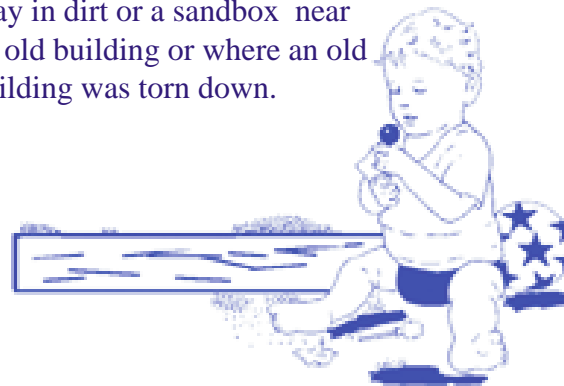
What is childhood lead poisoning?

Childhood lead poisoning is a disease that occurs when children have too much lead in their bodies.

How do children become lead-poisoned?

Children become lead-poisoned if they:

- Put lead-based paint chips in their mouths.
- Put dusty or dirty hands, toys, bottles, or pacifiers in their mouths.
- Chew on surfaces painted with lead-based paint.
- Play in dirt or a sandbox near an old building or where an old building was torn down.



- Breathe in dust from lead-based paint that is being sanded, scraped, or removed with a heat gun.

How common is lead poisoning?

One out of every seven Iowa children is lead-poisoned. This is three times the national average.

Lead poisoning is usually caused by lead-based paint found in homes built before 1960. About 60% of the homes in Iowa, both in urban and rural areas, were built before 1960.



Could your child be lead-poisoned?

Yes — most children with lead poisoning do not look sick. Lead-poisoned children may:

- Be easily excited.
- Have problems paying attention.
- Complain of stomach aches and headaches.
- Be more tired than usual.



Lead-poisoned children may have learning problems when they start school.

Children with very high lead levels may have severe brain damage or even die.



Iowa Department of Public Health

Promoting and protecting the health of Iowans

How can you tell if your child is lead-poisoned?

The only way to tell if your child is lead-poisoned is to have their blood tested. All Iowa children under the age of 6 years should be tested for lead poisoning.



Ask your health care provider to do a blood lead test whenever your child has a check-up.

This test is required for children who are covered by Medicaid. Many insurance plans also pay for this test.

How often should your child be tested for lead poisoning?

It's important to get their blood lead level tested at least once a year until they are six years old.



Many children have normal blood lead levels at 6-12 months of age.

However, these same children may become lead-poisoned when they are older and more active.

What will happen if your child is lead-poisoned?

Someone from a local health or housing agency or the Iowa Department of Public Health will visit you.



They will show you where your child is being exposed to lead. They will also explain how to take care of the problem.

How can I protect my child from lead poisoning?

Keep your child away from areas of peeling and chipping paint. Be sure to check the following areas:

- Window sills.
- Window troughs (area between the storm window and the inside window sash).
- Outdoor play areas.



Be sure to check your home and other homes where your child visits.

Wash your child's hands before meals and snacks. Also wash your child's toys or pacifier often.

If you plan to do any painting or remodeling in a pre-1960 home, find out how to do the work safely.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about lead poisoning and how you can protect your children, contact one of the following agencies:

Iowa Department of Public Health
1 (800) 972-2026
(515) 281-3479

or your local
city or county health department
or housing agency

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