If you're pregnant



See your medical provider for a risk assessment questionnaire to find out if you should be tested for lead.

If you have an infant or young child who is 0-6 years old

Do not let your child chew on painted surfaces or eat paint chips. Some old paint has lead in it. When paint gets old, it breaks down into dust. This dust spreads all around your home.



Ask your child's doctor for a blood lead test at 12 and 24 months.

12 MOS

24 MOS

If your child did not have a blood lead test at 12 or 24 months, contact your health care provider to schedule testing for your child.

Wash your child's hands and toys often. Always wash hands before eating and sleeping. Lead dust and dirt can stick to hands and toys that children put in their mouths.

Feed your child healthy meals and snacks every day. Make sure to give your child fruit and vegetables with every meal, and foods that have:

- **Calcium**
  - Milk, yogurt, cheese, soy milk, spinach, corn tortillas



- **Iron**
  - Beef, chicken, eggs, turkey, dried beans, iron-fortified multi-grain cereals, tofu, collards, kale, mustard greens



- **Vitamin C**
  - Oranges, tomatoes, limes, bell peppers, berries, papaya, broccoli



Calcium, iron, and vitamin C help keep lead from hurting your child.

Be aware of Illinois lead testing guidelines

As of July 1, 2026 Illinois law now requires all children to receive blood lead tests at 12 and 24 months, regardless of where they live. Testing involves a routine blood lead test (typically a simple finger-prick to start). Children ages 6 and younger must also receive a lead exposure risk assessment using a questionnaire from a healthcare provider. Public health home inspections are required when a child's confirmed blood lead level reaches 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL).

Learn more

Visit Cook County Department of Public Health at **leadsafecookcounty.com.**

LEAD-SAFE COOK COUNTY
leadsafecookcounty.com

Protect your child from lead.



Lead can hurt your child.

Lead poisoning can make it hard for children to learn, pay attention, and behave. Most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick.

Take these steps to keep your family safe.

Cook County Department of Public Health
A division of Cook County Health
BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Lead in Your Home

The use of lead-based paint was not banned until 1978.

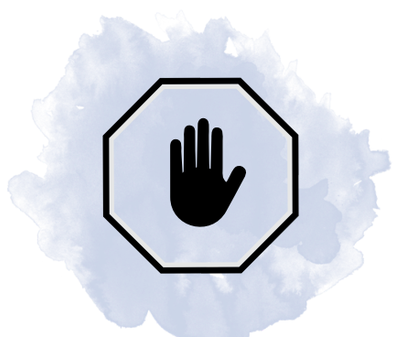
If your home was built before 1978, take the following precautions.



Keep lead dust and dirt from spreading in the house by wet washing surfaces like windowsills and floors often and removing shoes before entering your home.

Keep furniture away from paint that is chipped or peeling. Move cribs, playpens, beds, and high chairs away from damaged paint. This helps keep lead in paint chips and dust away from your child.

Never sand, dry scrape, power wash, or sandblast paint unless it has been tested and does not have lead in it.



Lead can get into your water from lead-lined or galvanized pipes. **To reduce risk of lead in water, let water run until it feels cold before using it for cooking, drinking, or baby formula** (if used).



If water needs to be heated, **use cold tap water and heat it on the stove or in a microwave.**

Lead air emissions from sources like leaded aviation gas, factories, and the past use of lead in gasoline may be in the air or dirt around your home.

Consider using air purifiers with a HEPA filter.

Cover bare dirt with a plastic tarp where your child plays with grass or other plants, bark, gravel, or concrete. This keeps lead in the dirt away from your child. Leave the tarp and the dirt outside.



Lead at Work

Lead is in many workplaces, such as:



- Painting and remodeling
- Radiator repair
- Battery recycling
- Shooting ranges

Ask your employer if you work with lead.

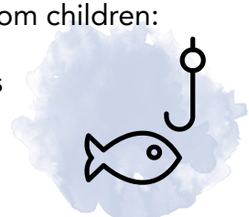
Children can be poisoned from lead dust brought home on skin, hair, clothes and shoes, and in the car.

If you work with lead, change out of work clothes and shoes, and wash up or shower before getting in a car or going home.

Lead in Things You Use

Avoid using water crocks or dishes and pots that are worn or antique, from a discount or flea market, made of crystal, handmade, or made outside the USA unless they have been tested and don't have lead.

These items also have lead in them and should be kept away from children:



- Lead fishing sinkers
- Lead bullets
- Lead solder

Keep jewelry away from children. Some jewelry has lead. Even items marked "lead free" can have lead in them.

Talk to your doctor before using imported products that can have lead in them, such as:

- **Home remedies** like:
  - Brightly colored powders for stomachache or other illnesses
- **Make-up** and ceremonial powders like:
  - Kohl, Khali, Surma, or Sindoor
- **Food or spices** like:
  - Chapulines or turmeric

