

HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD POISONING



Penn Medicine
Lancaster General Health

Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. Children six years old and younger are most susceptible to the effects of lead.

Who is at risk for lead poisoning?

Children: Their growing bodies absorb more lead than adults, and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects.

Adults, including pregnant women: Eating and drinking food or water containing lead or from dishes or glasses that contain lead. Spending time in areas where lead-based paint is deteriorating, or working in a job or engaging in hobbies where lead is used.

What are the effects of lead poisoning?

Children: Even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in:

- Behavior and learning problems
- Lower IQ and hyperactivity
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia

Adults, including pregnant women: Lead can accumulate in our bodies over time, where it is stored in bones along with calcium. During pregnancy, lead is released from the mother's bones along with calcium and can pass from the mother exposing the fetus or the breastfeeding infant to lead. This can result in serious effects to the developing fetus and infant, including:

- Cause the baby to be born too early or too small
- Hurt the baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system
- Increase the likelihood of learning or behavioral problems
- Put the mother at risk for miscarriage

How do I lower lead exposure?

Keeping your home clean and well-maintained will go a long way in preventing lead exposure.

- Inspect and maintain all painted surfaces to prevent paint deterioration
- Address water damage quickly and completely
- Clean around painted areas where friction can generate dust, such as doors, and windows
- Flush water outlets used for drinking or food preparation



For questions, contact us at 717-544-LEAD (5323) or Info@LeadFreeFamilies.org

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