

LEAD POISONING

A Factsheet from Austin Energy's Green Building Program

Information on lead poisoning, including a list of ways to protect your child from lead and possible sources of lead around the home.

Children and Lead

Children are extremely susceptible to environmental lead poisoning due to their low body weight and their sense of adventure. The same amount of lead that could mildly poison an adult can severely harm a small child, especially a child younger than six years of age. Lead causes damage to brain, kidneys, and stomach, and can slow development and cause learning / behavioral problems in children. The Texas Department of Health recommends checking children between the ages of six months and six years for lead at least once a year. Lead can concentrate in the blood and a simple blood test can assess your child's exposure. Lead can also cause low birth weights and premature birth in pregnant women.

The following list of ways to protect your child from lead poisoning was taken from a pamphlet entitled *Get the Lead Out: Prevention: How to protect children against lead poisoning*, published by the Texas Department of Health.

1. Wash your child's hands and face before meals and bedtime.
2. Give your child three healthy meals and two nutritious snacks a day.
3. Foods high in iron and calcium (like lean meat, fortified cereals, eggs, raisins, greens, milk, cheese, fruit, and potatoes) help protect your child from lead. Limit foods high in fat and oil (such as fried foods and snacks like potato chips).
4. Wash fruits and vegetables before eating them.
5. Wash your hands and the countertops before preparing food.
6. Clean up chipping and peeling paint inside and outside your home.
7. Clean up paint chips and lead dust on windowsills and on the floor near windows, doorways and woodwork. Use a damp mop or cloth and a high phosphate cleaner.
8. Wash your child's toys and pacifier often.
9. Do not store food in open cans.
10. Do not store or serve food in glazed pottery, glazed ceramic ware, pewter, or lead crystal.
11. If you work with lead, shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash your work clothes separately, and take off you shoes before entering the house.
12. Run cold water for a few minutes before using it for cooking and drinking. Do not use water from the hot water tap for cooking, drinking, or making formula.
13. Do not give your child folk medicines (like greta, pay-loo-ah, azarcon) from countries outside of the US. Some of these folk remedies contain a high amount of lead.

The following is a list of sources of lead in and around the home:

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| ❖ Old abandoned cars | ❖ Old batteries | ❖ Lead water pipes and solder joints |
| ❖ Some craft and hobby supplies | ❖ Paint on porches and steps | ❖ Some folk medicines |
| ❖ Lead bearing household dust | ❖ Fumes from burning painted wood | ❖ Chips and debris from outside paint |
| ❖ Food stored or served in lead glazed pottery | ❖ Lead paint on walls, woodwork, furniture and toys | ❖ Lead debris and dust created by home renovation |
| ❖ Food contaminated by lead in soil or dust | ❖ Soil in yards, playgrounds, or gardens near painted buildings or busy streets | |

HEALTH

Resources

National Lead Information Center

1 (800) LEAD FYI [532-3394]

US EPA Region 6 – Dallas, TX

Lead Poisoning and Your Children

pamphlet # EPA 800-B-92-002 February 1995

Lead In Your Home: A Parent's Reference Guide

booklet # EPA 747-B-98-002 June 1998

(214) 665 - 7244 – EPA Toxic Section

(214) 665 - 7577 – Jeff Robinson

(214) 665 - 8348 – Anna Treines, Lead Disclosure Rule (complaints)

Consumer Product Safety Commission

1-800-638-2772 – Consumer Hotline

www.cpsc.gov/

Toxic Substances Control Act Hotline

(Federal Publications / Questions)

(202) 554 - 1404

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC)

1 (800) CLEAN UP [253-2687] – Environmental Information Line

(512) 239 6020 – Lead in Water, Roy Yantis or Margaret Canty

www.tnrcc.state.tx.us/air/monops/lessons/leadinfo.html

National Lead Information Clearinghouse

Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home

pamphlet # EPA747-K-94-001 May 1995

1 (800) 424 LEAD

www.hud.gov/lea/leadhelp.html (view pamphlets online)

HUD User (HUD Publications/EPA-HUD Training Kits)

1 (800) 245 – 2691

www.hud.gov/lea/

US Department of HUD (Washington DC)

(202) 755 – 1810 – Lead Hazard Control

Texas Department of Health (TDH)

Environmental Lead Branch

1100 W. 49th Street

Austin, TX 78756

1 (888) 778 - 9440 or (512) 834 - 6612

www.tdh.state.tx.us/beh/web.htm

Related Websites

www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm

www.nsc.org/ehc/lead.htm