



Be Lead Free! News



ABC's of Childhood Lead Poisoning

by Maureen Butler RN, BSN

How do children become lead poisoned?

Young children, especially toddlers and pre-schoolers are curious. They often explore by putting everything in their mouths. If your house or apartment was built before 1978, it could have been painted with lead paint. As the house gets older, the paint may chip and flake off and easily gets on fingers. Most young children put their fingers in their mouths and the lead dust is swallowed. Even when the old paint is covered with new safe paint, the new paint can be chipped and worn down so that the old leaded paint is a problem again. Lead paint has a sweet taste and some children will look for more paint chips to eat. Lead can be found outdoors too— on painted porches and steps, in the dirt in the yard and even on old playground equipment. Lead can also be found in the water in certain parts of the United States. If a parent or other adult has a job that has lead exposure, it is important to shower and change clothes before coming home from work.

How does lead hurt children? Lead is a heavy metal that causes damage to young children's growing brains. The problems from lead poisoning usually aren't seen until children start school. They often have trouble paying attention and following the teacher's instructions. As children who have been lead poisoned get older, school becomes more frustrating and difficult.

How do I know if my child has lead poisoning? All children should have a blood test to check for lead when the child is 1 year old and again at 2 years old. Children in this age group are most at risk because of their hand to mouth activity and their small body size. A blood test is the only way to know if a child has lead in their body. If you are worried, you can ask for a lead test at any medical visit.

How can you protect your child from lead poisoning? It is very important to inspect your house or apartment for anything that might have lead in it. If your house is old (built before 1978), protect your little ones from peeling and chipping paint. If you rent, let your landlord know that the peeling paint is dangerous for young children and ask that it be repaired. If you own your home, you must make repairs very carefully. If it isn't done carefully, it can make the problem worse. Adults can get lead poisoning too, especially if they breathe in lead dust when they are making repairs. All repair work must be done by someone who has been trained to do lead paint removal. Your local health department can tell you how to get training to repair a home with lead paint in it. Lead poisoning is a serious problem but you can protect your child. Look for lead hazards and keep your child away from the places that have lead until those areas can be repaired and made safe.

In every county health department, there is someone who can answer your questions and help you to keep your child lead safe!



LEAD SAFE PLAYTIME



All of us who live in cold winter climates smile when the sun is shining and the air is warm again. For families with young children who are full of energy, it is wonderful to be able to take them outdoors to play.

It is also a time to watch carefully for ways that small children can become lead poisoned. If the paint on the outside of the house is peeling and chipping, you need to keep your toddler and pre-school age children away from the paint chips. Many older homes have been re-painted with newer lead safe paint, but as time goes by the new paint chips and flakes off and the older lead paint underneath is still there. Your child needs to swallow only a few old lead paint chips to become lead poisoned.

Old homes with big front porches are also a hazard. For little ones who like to sit on the porch floor, the paint dust and chips land on their fingers. It is very normal for babies and toddlers to put their hands in their mouths. If your apartment or home has an outdoor porch and steps with peeling or chipping paint, do not let children play there.

If you must walk across the porch floor to go in and out of the house, take your shoes off at the front door. This will prevent the lead dust and paint flakes from being tracked all through the house. If possible, use another door to go in and out of the house until the porch and steps can be repaired by the owner of the house.

If your home has a yard, it may not be covered with grass. If the outside of the house has had lead paint on it, the chips and flakes have fallen off the house over the years and are in the dirt near the house. If the house has old lead paint or you aren't sure, take the children to a lead safe playground to play.

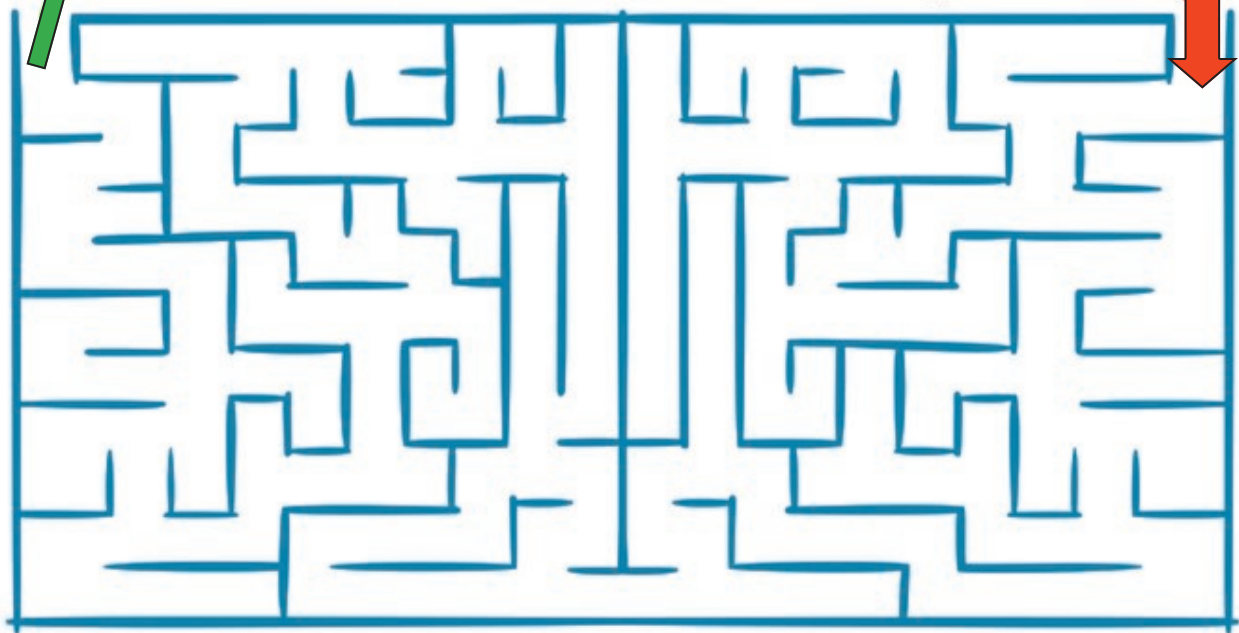


Outdoor play in the summertime can be fun and safe!

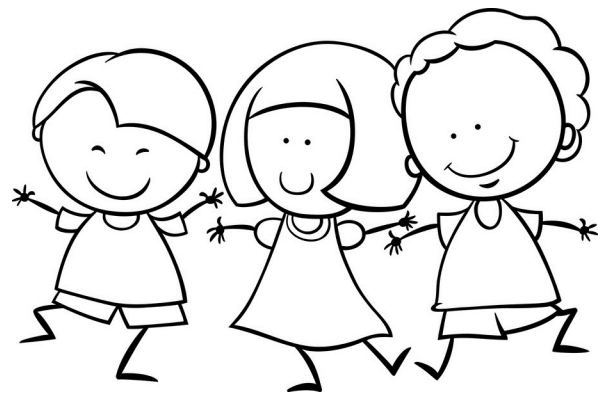
Be "A-MAZING": Play Outside AND Stay Lead Safe!

by Karen Buchinger RN, BSN

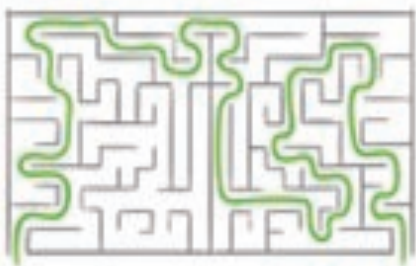
Can you help these kids find their way through the maze to the lead-safe playground?



Color these kids to look like friends you know!



MAZE ANSWER (upside down)



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Central / Eastern New York

Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource Center

SUNY Upstate



HELPING YOUR CHILD THROUGH A BLOOD TEST



DO be calm yourself. If you are nervous or afraid, your child will notice that and become more fearful too.



DO keep your tone of voice quiet, calm and reassuring.



DO try to distract your child with a story or song while the blood is being drawn.



DO give your child a big hug and praise for doing a good job after the blood test is done.



DO ask for help from the nurse or technician if you don't know how to help your child.



DON'T connect the blood test to bad behavior. (For example, don't say "You are having this test because you didn't behave this morning").



DON'T use negative words or threats to get your child to behave for the blood test.



DON'T tell your child that she/he will never need another blood test.