



Be Lead Free! News

Lead Safe Summer Fun

by Maureen Butler BSN, RN



After a cold and snowy winter, the warm temperatures and bright sunshine are so welcome! Taking your young children outside to play can be lots of fun, but safety is important too. If you live in an older neighborhood, protecting your preschoolers from lead poisoning is important.

Lead is a heavy metal that can cause damage to a young child's growing brain. Old lead paint can be found chipping and peeling off older homes. Any house built before 1978 might have lead in the paint. The lead dust can easily stick to children's hands and be swallowed when a young child puts his fingers in his mouth. Lead paint has a sweet taste and some children will look for more once they have tasted the leaded paint chips or dust.



Washing hands frequently is the best way to keep the lead off their hands. If you are taking a walk or going to the park, bring along some damp paper towels in a zip lock bag- instant hand washing when not at home!

Lead can also be in the yard outside when old lead paint chips and flakes off the house. If the paint is coming off the rented house or apartment you live in, the landlord is responsible to safely repair the damage. It is very important that your children be away from the house when repair work is being done and the area has been carefully cleaned up and inspected before they return.

How can you know if your child has lead poisoning? A blood test will measure how much lead is in your child. Your child's doctor should order a blood lead test at your child's first birthday check-up and again when your child is 2 years old. Children this age are most at risk because of lots of hand to mouth activity and their small body size. At any age, the lead test can be done if you are worried that your child has been exposed to lead.

So take your hand washing "kit" and head outside with your little ones to enjoy a sunny warm play time that is lead safe!!





Parents' Most Frequently Asked Questions About Lead Poisoning

by Jennifer Lieberman BSN, RN

Q: My child's blood lead test is too high. How did she get exposed to lead?

A: Lead is a naturally occurring substance. It is commonly found in older homes as it was used in paint before 1978. It has also been found in some pipes, water, pesticides, gasoline and dirt. In 1978 the United States banned the use of lead in paint and in 1990 it was banned from gasoline. Most commonly, lead exposure in children occurs from the old lead based paint. For example, as the paint in an older, pre-1978, home peels and cracks, layers of old lead paint beneath the surface begin to form lead dust. This dust and any chips of the lead paint can often get on young children's hands, clothing, toys, etc. Toddlers and pre-schoolers put everything in their mouth!

Q: So my older home has lead in the walls?

A: If it was built before 1978, there is a likelihood that there are some layers of lead paint that have been covered over the years with newer lead-free paint. The only way to determine the presence of lead is for a qualified Lead Renovator or inspector from the Health Department to test a sample.

Q: Should I move to a new home?

A: Not necessarily. Just because an older home has lead based paint does not mean that it is always dangerous. As long as the painted walls, window sills, and concrete all have fresh coats of lead-free paint, and there are no cracks that would form lead dust/chips, you can safely live in this home. If there is lead in other locations in your home such as in the water or pipes, the owner of the residence needs to repair these areas to maintain a lead-free and safe environment.

Q: What else can I do to help my child be lead safe?

A: The best thing you can do is to live in a lead safe home. But if you aren't sure about the lead safety in homes you visit, frequent hand washing is helpful. As children crawl around and touch and explore their environments, the lead dust that they come in contact with can be swallowed. It is also important to remember to wet dust and wet mop as much as you can instead of dry dusting and dry mopping. Dry dusting and dry mopping only spreads the lead dust into the air. By using wet rags and wet mops you can avoid the lead dust being suspended in the air only to land on the floor again. A diet rich in calcium and iron is also very important in a child who has been exposed to lead. Chicken, beans, fish, whole grains, eggs, lean beef and dark leafy green vegetables such as spinach are excellent sources of iron. Milk, yogurt, fortified juices, and cheese are excellent sources of calcium. (If your child is less than 1 year of age, avoid cow's milk as children cannot digest it when they are this young).

Q: My child is a very picky eater; what do I do?

A: Not to worry, you can still get your child the proper nutrients needed! Spinach contains both Calcium and Iron and a handful of fresh spinach can be added to fruit smoothies in a blender without changing the taste! Red beans and rice with chicken fingers are a meal option that contains iron. And let's not forget the calcium from cheese in a pizza! Of course, you don't want this to be an everyday occurrence, but pizza Fridays can now be calcium Fridays! If after these attempts, you are unable to get your child to eat these foods, contact your primary care provider for recommendations on vitamin or mineral supplements.



Q: How do I find out if there is lead in my home?

A: Contact your local County Health Department Lead Program to ask how a home inspection might be possible.



Be a **SUPER** dirt fighter!

by Karen Buchinger MLS, BSN, RN

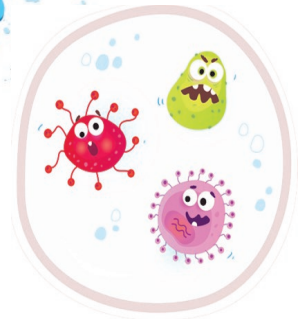


"SuperDuper" boy & girl drawings © Kate Hadfield Designs

Dirt and germs make double troubles
So wash your hands with soapy bubbles

Rub and scrub like a **SUPERHERO**
Make dirt on your hands equal = **ZERO**

Superheroes really use their brain
By making germs and dirt go down the drain.



You can be a handwashing Superhero too!

Color in these handwashing superheroes and draw a face for each one.

Hang up this page over the sink to remind you to wash your hands often.

By Karen Buchinger MLS, BSN, RN



Superheroes wash dirt and germs down the drain!

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Central / Eastern New York

Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource Center

SUNY Upstate



Ending Childhood Lead Poisoning

It has been known for many years that exposure to lead is not healthy for children. We know that children who have been lead poisoned have a more difficult time in school and the damage done cannot be reversed.

Lead is found in many places but the most common way that children are exposed to lead is in old paint chips and paint dust. The chips and dust are on children's hands and swallowed when a toddler or pre-schooler puts those dusty fingers and hands into their mouth. Lead was added to paint for many years. It was not banned from paint until 1978.

In many communities, parents are talking about lead poisoning and passing on the information about lead poisoning to family and friends. When a parent, teacher, medical provider or anyone who works with children knows about this danger, change can occur.

In some communities, parents are working with others to educate families about lead poisoning. The best protection for our children is to live in apartments and houses that are lead safe.

Let your community leaders know that you want strict laws put into place to make all homes safe from lead hazards. **Our kids deserve to be lead free!**

