



There is **no** safe level of lead in the body. Lead can harm anyone, but babies, young children and pregnant women are at special risk. The harm done by lead may never go away. Too much lead in children's bodies, or lead poisoning, can:

- Hurt their brain, kidneys and nervous system
- Slow down growth and development
- Make it hard to learn
- Damage hearing and speech
- Cause behavior problems

## Lead Paint

In Vermont, most lead poisoning comes from swallowing invisible lead dust that comes from peeling and chipping paint. The dust clings to fingers and objects that children put in their mouths. Houses built before 1978 likely have lead paint. Children may also eat, chew or suck on lead-painted objects like windowsills, toys or furniture.

Children can also breathe in lead dust during renovation projects or whenever lead paint is not properly sanded, scraped or burned.

## Lead in Soil

Soil alongside older homes may contain lead from paint flaking off the outside of the building. Soil near roadways or driveways may also contain lead from car exhaust when leaded gasoline was used. Lead-contaminated soil can be brought into your home on shoes.

## Lead in Drinking Water

Lead gets into drinking water as it moves through lead or galvanized iron pipes and fittings, lead solder, and brass or chrome fixtures.

## Other Sources of Lead

- **Products and imported goods** such as keys, toys, jewelry, folk remedies and medicines, and imported food, candy, cosmetics and glazed pottery
- **Hobbies and crafts** involving car parts, stained glass, artists paints jewelry, pottery glazes, fishing sinkers, bullets and [old maple sugaring equipment](#)
- **Antiques and vintage goods** such as furniture, glassware, dishes, leaded crystal, brass, pewter, ceramics, tools and salvaged building materials
- **Parent's or caregiver's jobs** that involve lead such as painting, plumbing, metal production, building renovation, demolition, or manufacturing

## What to do to prevent lead poisoning

Keep your children away from sources of lead. If you are a tenant in a house built before 1978, your landlord must look for chipping and peeling paint and fix it in a lead-safe way. You can also help prevent lead poisoning by maintaining your house in good condition, cleaning in a lead-safe way, eating healthy foods, and watching out for other sources of lead.

### Maintain



- Check for chipping, peeling, cracked or disturbed paint.
- Install window well inserts to provide a smooth cleaning surface.
- Use lead-safe work practices – such as wet sanding and wet scraping.

### Clean



- Use only a vacuum with a HEPA filter, and vacuum slowly.
- Wet mop floors and use wet disposable towels on windowsills and surfaces.
- Leave shoes at the door to avoid tracking in soil that contains lead.
- Wash children's toys often to remove invisible lead dust.

### Eat healthy



- Serve children fruits, vegetables and dairy products, as well as iron-rich foods.
- Plant vegetable and other food gardens in lead-free soil.
- Wash children's hands often, especially before meals, naps and bedtime.
- Serve snacks and meals to children at the table or in their highchairs.

### Watch out for other sources of lead



- Have your drinking water tested for lead. Learn more at [healthvermont.gov/water/lead](https://healthvermont.gov/water/lead)
- Run water until cold for cooking, drinking and making formula.
- Keep children from playing in bare soil near roadways and older houses.
- Do not let children play with metal keys.
- Do not store food in open cans or pottery.
- Keep children away from certain hobbies, like making bullets or stained glass.
- Be aware of products that have been recalled by the Consumer Product Safety Commission ([www.cpsc.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov)).

### Test your child for lead

A blood lead test will let you know if your child has been exposed to lead. Your child should have a blood lead test at age 1 and again at age 2.

### Questions?

Call the Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 802-863-7220 or 800-439-8550 (toll-free in Vermont) or visit [healthvermont.gov/lead](https://healthvermont.gov/lead).