



# PROTECT YOUR FAMILY FROM LEAD

FOR MHS MEMBERS



## KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT LEAD

Lead can harm children whether they live in a city, suburb or rural area. Lead can affect people from all economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

### QUESTIONS?

MHS is here to help. Call Member Services at 1-877-647-4848 or visit us online at [mhsindiana.com](http://mhsindiana.com).



## Test Your Home and Family

You or your children may look healthy, but you can still have high levels of lead in your blood. The only way to know for sure is to have a blood test done by a healthcare provider. These tests from your doctor are covered for you at no cost through your membership with MHS. You can also have your home, soil and water tested. Contact the Indiana Department of Health Lead and Healthy Homes (IDOH) at 1-317-233-1250 for testing information.

## Reduce Lead's Dangers

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Keep house surfaces clean. Wash floors, window wells, frames and sills, and play areas weekly.
- Wash toys often. Don't let your children lick or chew painted surfaces.
- Don't let your children eat snow.
- Wash children's hands before they eat. Also wash them before they take a nap and go to sleep at night.
- Feed your children healthy meals. This includes meals high in calcium and iron. Children who have a healthy diet don't take in as much lead.
- If you notice paint chips, clean them up right away.
- Check sleeping areas for chipped paint or signs of chewed-on paint.
- Remove vinyl mini blinds if made outside the U.S. before 1997.
- Don't remove lead paint. Ask your local health or safety department for a list of people who can safely remove it.
- Be aware of toy recalls due to lead paint. Sign up for recall alerts at the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission website: [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov).
- Be aware of your blood level numbers.
- Lead Abatement are actions designed to remove lead-based paint hazards. You can learn more from the Lead & Healthy Homes Division: [in.gov/health/lead-and-healthy-homes-division/abatement-information/](http://in.gov/health/lead-and-healthy-homes-division/abatement-information/).

## Where is Lead Found?

You may know lead is found in older types of paint, but lead could also be in other places such as:

- Your home and yard
- Your children's playground and school
- Drinking water from plumbing that used lead solder to connect pipes
- Surfaces with old paint that is chipping or cracking
- Lead dust from some vinyl mini blinds
- Lead dust from window and wall surfaces and outside soil stirred up while vacuuming
- Lead crystal or lead-glazed dishes
- Old painted furniture and toys
- Lead in soil from old outside paint
- Fishing sinkers, shotgun shells, tobacco products, match tips and batteries
- Industrial worksites
- Exhaust from leaded gas, industrial pollution or old lead-based fertilizers

## Lead Found in Natural Health Medicines

Lead has been found in some traditional (folk) medicines. It has been found in folk medicines from East Indian, Indian, Middle Eastern, West Asian and Hispanic cultures. Folk medicines can contain herbs, minerals, metals or animal products. Lead and other heavy metals are sometimes incorrectly used as treatments. Or lead can get into the folk medicine during grinding and coloring. It can also leach into the medicine from the packaging.



## Lead Found in Imported Candy

Sometimes candy imported from Mexico has a danger of lead contamination. Certain candy ingredients, such as chili powder and tamarind, may be linked to lead. Lead can get into the candy during drying, storing and grinding if the process is not done properly. Lead has also been found in the candy wrappers, where it can leach into the candy.

The safest option – Do not buy imported candy or use folk medicines. Sellers may not know if the candy or folk medicine you are buying could contain lead. You can't tell by looking at it or tasting it if it has lead. Consuming even small amounts of lead can be harmful. There is no safe blood lead level. Lead poisoning from folk medicines can cause illness and even death.

## Good Nutrition Helps Protect Against Lead Poisoning

Vitamin C, iron and calcium are especially helpful because they can help the body absorb less lead.

Good sources of Vitamin C are vegetables such as tomatoes, bell peppers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, greens and kale; and fruits like oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, strawberries and cantaloupe.

Good sources of iron are meats such as beef, chicken, turkey and liver (try to serve lean meats); fish; vegetables such as cooked dried beans, peas, broccoli, baked potatoes, greens and spinach; and fruits like raisins, dates and other dried fruits.

Good sources of calcium are dairy products such as cheese and yogurt; and vegetables like broccoli, collard and turnip greens and kale.

Limit foods high in fat, salt and sugar like potato chips, candy, soda, fried foods, bacon and sausage. Be sure to wash and/or peel your fruits and vegetables before eating!

## **Lead is a metal. It was once used in things like paint, china and water pipes.**

There is no safe level of lead. Breathing, touching or eating outside soil, paint or dust containing lead is the most likely way of being exposed. Dust gets on the hands. It can then enter the mouth. Children may also chew on lead paint because it can taste sweet.

### **Lead Hurts Kids**

Young children are at the greatest risk. And because their bodies are growing and developing quickly, the effects of lead can be very damaging.

- Their bodies absorb lead more easily than adult bodies do.
- Young children often put things in their mouths that could have lead on them.
- Most often you will not notice any signs of lead poisoning in children.
- Behavior, learning and sleep problems may be caused by lead.
- Other signs of lead poisoning include clumsiness, weakness, headaches and hearing problems. It can also cause slow growth, stomach problems, seizures and comas.

### **Lead Hurts Adults**

While children are at higher risk, adults can also get lead poisoning.

- It can cause problems with blood pressure and muscles. It can hurt your kidneys, nerves and stomach.
- It can make you unable to have children. This is true for both men and women.
- Lead can also cause problems during pregnancy.
- Lead can hurt memory and concentration.
- It can cause irritability.

### **Pregnant Women Need To Be Careful, Too**

- If lead is in a pregnant woman's blood, it can be passed on to her unborn baby.
- If it is in her bones from earlier exposure, it can also reach her baby.
- Pregnant women who are exposed to lead are more likely to have babies with low birth weight, miscarriages or stillbirths.

MHS has been proudly serving the state of Indiana for more than twenty five years through Hoosier Healthwise, the Healthy Indiana Plan and Hoosier Care Connect. MHS also offers Ambetter from MHS in the Indiana health insurance marketplace, and Wellcare By Allwell, a Medicare advantage plan. All of our plans include quality, comprehensive coverage, with a provider network you can trust.

MHS is your choice for better healthcare.  
Learn more at [mhsindiana.com](http://mhsindiana.com).

