



# CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

**Your Trusted Source For Public Health Information**

## **Facts about lead poisoning**

Children 5 years old and younger are at risk for lead poisoning. Ask your doctor when to schedule your child's next lead test.

Most children with lead poisoning do not look or act sick. A blood test is the only way to see if your child has been exposed to lead.

Lead poisoning may cause behavior problems, hearing problems, speech problems or learning problems.

Talk to your doctor about multi-vitamins or iron supplements to help reduce your child's lead level.

## **Where does lead come from?**

Lead paint was typically used in homes built before 1978. The top layers of paint may not contain lead, but the layers underneath may contain lead paint.

Children are exposed to lead from lead paint that is chipping, flaking or chalking.

Most children are exposed to lead from dust made from lead paint. Lead dust gets on their toys or hands. Children also put their hands or toys in their mouth.

Most children do not eat paint chips.

Common areas to find lead paint and lead dust are windows, doors, outside of the house and porches.

Lead dust can come from dirt too. Keep children out of the dirt.

You can bring lead dust into your home on your shoes.

Washing floors and window can reduce lead dust in your home. HEPA vacuums also reduce lead dust. By reducing lead dust, your child's lead will come down naturally. CCBH has a HEPA vacuum loaner program. Please call 216.201.2001 extension 1215 to learn more.

### **How do I protect my child from lead?**

Make sure your child has a lead test at least once a year until they turn six years old.

Wash your child's hands before they eat.

Wash your child's toys and pacifiers often.

Cover bare dirt with mulch or plant grass. Children should not play in dirt.

Use a mat to wipe your shoes, or take your shoes off at the door.

Clean window wells and sills, floors and furniture with wet paper towels.

Throw the paper towels away after each use.

Do not try to fix lead paint yourself.

Call CCBH for advice about removing lead paint: 216.201.2001 ext. 2007.

### **Healthy foods can help lower lead levels.**

Foods high in iron and protein: lean red meats, chicken, fish, dried beans, peas, lentils, spinach, and broccoli.

Foods high in vitamin C: oranges, juices, tomatoes, broccoli, and sweet potatoes.

Foods high in calcium: milk, cheese, yogurt, leafy green vegetables, kale, turnip and collard greens.

Fatty foods increase the absorption of lead in children.

Limit fried foods, bakery, and meats such as hamburger, bologna, and salami.