

Effects of Lead on Children

For children, lead exposure is especially dangerous. In the body, lead, which is unnecessary and toxic, easily replaces important and necessary elements such as iron and calcium as well as other minerals that children need to grow up healthy. Even extremely low levels of lead can harm growing tissue, organs, muscles and bone, slowing the child's development and causing behavioral and learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, decreased IQ, speech, language, as well as multiple behavior problems.

Some symptoms to be on the look-out for include:

- Headaches
- Stomachaches, Dizziness or Throwing Up
- Muscle and Joint Weakness or Pain
- Reduced Attention Span
- Metallic Taste in the Mouth
- Tiredness (Loss of Energy) or Hyperactivity
- Sleeping Problems
- Constipation
- Loss of Appetite
- Irritability or Crankiness
- Unintended Weight Loss
- Decreases Interest in Playing

It is common for parents to not even notice these signs because they may quickly go away or be confused with an illness like the flu. A blood test is the only sure way to tell if a child has too much lead in their body.

If a child has been exposed to high levels of lead, they will generally have more severe symptoms like vomiting or seizures (convulsions). It is even possible for high lead levels to cause coma or death. A child with high lead levels should receive immediate medical attention to try and reduce the amount of lead in their bodies as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, treatment for lead poisoning is not a cure, but it can help to get lead circulating in the bloodstream out of the body through the urine. After treatment, the child must have another blood test to make sure the lead level is reduced enough to prevent serious issues such as seizure, coma, or even death. Of course, the best protection is prevention. Avoid childhood lead poisoning from the start by eliminating all sources of lead exposure in their environment.