

What Caregivers Should Know About Lead



It is very common for young children to put things in their mouths; this is part of how they explore their world. This also places them at risk for ingesting lead. Since lead is highly toxic, lead exposure can cause serious health problems including permanent brain damage. Unfortunately, lead poisoning is often not noticed until it is too late. This is why prevention is essential.

FACTS ABOUT LEAD POISONING

- Generally, children with high blood-lead levels won't act, feel or look sick
- For younger children, lead is much more toxic than for older kids or adults
- Lead-based house paint is the main source of lead poisoning in children
- Soil (dirt), lead pipes, glazed pottery made outside the U.S., children's jewelry, batteries, home health remedies are all common sources of lead poisoning
- Certain jobs (construction, renovators, etc.) and hobbies from parents (oil painting, stained glass, etc.) can expose children to lead
- **The ONLY way to diagnose lead poisoning is with a blood test**

WHAT CAREGIVERS SHOULD DO

The Lead Poisoning Prevention Act of 2006 requires child care providers who receive child care assistance payments to provide families with information about the dangers of lead at least once a year. *Please share the information below with the families you serve.*

INSIDE THE HOME

- Check monthly for peeling and chipping paint (if built before 1978)
- Make sure beds, cribs or playpens are kept away from peeling, chipping paint
- As a temporary solution, cover chipped or peeling paint with contact paper or duct tape
- Repair and repaint deteriorated lead-paint surfaces as soon as possible
- Dry sweeping or vacuuming paint dust or chips stirs up the dust; **avoid it**
- Clean floors, baseboards, window frames/sills and other surfaces with warm water and non-abrasive cleaner
- Double-check that toys, children's jewelry, dinnerware and pottery for cooking do not contain lead
- Do not use hot tap water for making formula, cooking or drinking. Run cold tap water for 3 minutes before using. Consider having water tested or buying a filter.
- Pay attention to imported foods: candy wrappers and cans from other countries often contain lead
- Reinforce good hand-washing techniques in children