Lead and a Healthy Diet

What You Can Do to Protect Your Child

Lead's Effects on the Body

Lead is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems, and can harm your child's brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead in the body stops good minerals such as iron and calcium from working right. Some of these effects may be permanent.

Lead Awareness and Your Child

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood test. Ask your doctor or health care provider to test your child under six years of age at least once a year.

Lead Hazards

Where is Lead Found?

Main Sources of Lead

Lead-based paint is a hazard if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. Even lead-based paint that appears to be undisturbed can be a problem if it is on surfaces that children chew or that get a lot of wear and tear. The older your home is, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

Contaminated dust forms when lead paint is dry-scraped or sanded. Dust can also become contaminated when painted surfaces bump or rub together. Lead chips and dust can gather on surfaces and objects that people touch or that children put into their mouths.

Lead poisoning occurs **without** any **obvious symptoms** and **harms**

your child's body.

Contaminated soil occurs when exterior lead-based paint from houses, buildings, or other structures flakes or peels and gets into the soil. Soil near roadways may also be contaminated from past use of leaded gasoline in cars. Avoid these areas when planting vegetable gardens.

Other Sources of Lead

Contaminated drinking water from older plumbing fixtures

Lead-based painted toys and household furniture

Imported lead-glazed pottery and leaded crystal

Lead smelters

Hobbies

Folk remedies like azarcon and pay-loo-ah

Cosmetics like kohl and kajal

Do not store **food** in glazed pottery **from foreign countries.**

Meal and Snack Ideas

Tips to help you and your children plan meals and snacks

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Oatmeal swirlers Sliced banana Orange juice	Grilled cheese & tomato Coleslaw Low-fat milk	Sloppy joes Watermelon Low-fat milk
-or-	-or-	-or-
Cheese omelet Applesauce Low-fat milk	Tuna salad sandwich Cranberry juice Pear slices	Macaroni and cheese Stewed tomatoes Melon slice
-or-	-or-	-or-
French toast Orange sections Low-fat milk	Pizza bagel 100% fruit juice Fresh or canned peaches Low-fat milk	Chicken stew Rice Strawberries

Between meals offer small snacks such as:

Cereal with low-fat milk, whole wheat crackers with cheese, apple or pear slices, oranges or bananas, raisins, yogurt, frozen fruit juice pops, and fruit smoothies.

Many of the foods listed in this brochure can be bought with food vouchers from the WIC program. To find out more about WIC, call your child's pediatrician or visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic

Oatmeal Swirlers • Makes 4–6 servings

1 1/2 cups of quick cooking oats
1/3 cup of peanut butter
1/3 cup of fruit jelly or jam

Steps:

- Follow the package directions to cook oats.
- Spoon peanut butter and jelly on top of cooked oatmeal.
- Stir and spoon into bowls.
- Serve with low-fat milk.

Cheese Omelet • Makes 2–3 servings

3 eggs
1 tablespoon of low-fat milk
Vegetable oil
3 tablespoons of cheese

Steps:

- Mix eggs and milk in a bowl.
- Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
- Add egg mixture and cook.
- When omelet is cooked on the bottom, add cheese.
- When cheese is melted, fold omelet in half.
- Top with salsa if you like.
- Serve with toast, fruit, and low-fat milk.

French Toast • Makes 4–6 servings

3 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup of low-fat milk
Vegetable oil
6 slices of bread
Cinnamon
2 bananas, sliced

Steps:

- Mix eggs and milk.
- Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
- Dip bread into egg mixture, so that bread is covered.
- Brown one side of bread in pan.
- Sprinkle top with cinnamon.
- Turn over bread and brown the other side. Top with sliced banana.
- Serve with low-fat milk.

Grilled Cheese & Tomato Sandwich • Makes 1 serving

2 slices of bread
2 slices of American cheese
1 slice of tomato
Vegetable oil

Steps:

- Make sandwich using bread, cheese, and tomato.
- Lightly coat pan with vegetable oil.
- Brown sandwich on both sides over low heat to melt the cheese.
- Serve with low-fat milk or fruit juice.

Tuna Salad Sandwich • Makes 2 servings

4 slices of bread
1 can of water packed tuna
4 teaspoons of low-fat mayonnaise
Onion and celery, chopped

Steps:

- Mix tuna with low-fat mayonnaise, onion, and celery.
- Try your sandwich with cheese and tomato.
- Serve with low-fat milk.

Pizza Bagels • Makes 2–3 servings

1 bagel
2 tablespoons of tomato sauce
Garlic, basil, or oregano
2 tablespoons of cheddar cheese or part-skim mozzarella

Steps:

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
- Slice open a bagel and place on a flat pan.
- Add tomato sauce, seasonings, and cheese.
- Bake for 3 minutes or until cheese melts.
- Serve with fruit juice.

Sloppy Joes • Makes 4–6 servings

1 pound of lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken
1 small onion, chopped
1/2 green pepper, chopped
1 cup of tomato sauce
Your choice of seasonings
5 hamburger buns or pita pocket breads

Steps:

- In a pan, cook lean ground meat, onion, and green pepper until meat is well done.
- Drain fat.
- Stir in tomato sauce and seasonings.
- Cook for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Spoon into hamburger bun or pita.
- Serve with fruit juice.

Baked Macaroni and Cheese • Makes 3–5 servings

4 cups of cooked macaroni
3 cups of grated cheddar cheese
2 tablespoons of margarine
2 tablespoons of flour
Vegetable oil
2 cups of low-fat milk
Salt and pepper

Steps:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly coat casserole dish with vegetable oil.
- Mix cooked macaroni with grated cheese and pour into casserole.
- Melt margarine in a pan. Remove from heat, stir in flour. Return to heat.
- Add low-fat milk slowly, stirring until smooth.
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Pour over macaroni. Stir.
- Cover. Bake for 30 minutes.
- Uncover and bake for another 15 minutes.

Chicken Stew • Makes 6–8 servings

3 pounds of frying chicken, cut up into small pieces
Vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 stalk of celery, chopped
28 ounce can of stewed tomatoes
Poultry seasoning

Steps:

- Lightly coat pot with vegetable oil. Use medium heat.
- Cook chicken until it is well done.
- Add can of stewed tomatoes.
- Add vegetables and seasoning.
- Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes.
- Serve with rice or noodles.

Banana Strawberry Smoothie • Makes 2–3 servings

1 cup of low-fat milk
1 cup of fresh or frozen strawberries, mashed
1 ripe banana, mashed

Steps:

- Mix all together in a blender or use a wire whisk.
- Eat as a snack or for dessert.

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Regularly Eat Healthy Foods

Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs. Provide your child with four to six small meals during the day. The following nutrients can help protect your child from lead poisoning:

Iron-Rich Foods

Normal levels of iron work to protect the body from the harmful effects of lead. Good sources of dietary iron include:

Lean red meats, fish, and chicken
Iron-fortified cereals
Dried fruits (raisins, prunes)

Calcium-Rich Foods

Calcium reduces lead absorption and also helps make teeth and bones strong. Good sources of dietary calcium include:

Milk
Yogurt
Cheese
Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, collard greens)

Vitamin C-Rich Foods

Vitamin C and iron-rich foods work together to reduce lead absorption. Good sources of vitamin C include:

Oranges, orange juice
Grapefruits, grapefruit juice
Tomatoes, tomato juice
Green peppers

A healthy diet can help **protect** your **child from the harmful effects of lead.**

Simple Steps You Can Take
to Protect Your Family from Lead Hazards

If you think your home has high levels of lead:

- Make sure your children eat healthy, low-fat foods high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Get your children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy.
- Get your home tested for lead if it was built before 1978. Call **1-800-424-LEAD** for more information.
- Always wash your hands before eating.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys.
- Do not use imported pottery to store or serve food.
- Let tap water run for one minute before using.
- Use only cold water for making your baby's formula, drinking, and cooking.
- Regularly clean floors, windowsills, and other surfaces using wet methods that control dust.
- Wipe or remove shoes before entering your house.
- If you rent, it is your landlord's job to keep paint in good shape. Report peeling or chipping paint to your landlord and call your health department if the paint is not repaired safely.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating.
- Don't try to remove paint yourself!

For more information on childhood lead poisoning prevention:

Call

- Your child's pediatrician
- The National Lead Information Center **1-800-424-LEAD (424-5323)**
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Hotline **1-800-426-4791**

Visit

- EPA Lead Program Web site **www.epa.gov/lead**
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site **www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead**
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Web site **www.hud.gov/offices/lead**

Washington State Department of Health

Washington State Department of Health – Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention
1-800-909-9898 • www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/lead

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Fight Lead Poisoning with a Healthy Diet

Lead Poisoning Prevention Tips for Families

Washington State Department of Health

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Health Education Resource Exchange Web Team

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