

- 3) Because ordinary dirt and dust may contain lead, keep play areas as dust-free and clean as possible; wash toys and stuffed animals regularly; make sure your children wash their hands before meals, nap time, and bedtime.
- 4) Reduce risk from lead paint; make sure your child does not chew on anything covered with lead paint such as painted windowsills, cribs or playpens.
- 5) If your home does have lead paint, do not remove it yourself. Hire someone who has the special training needed to correct lead paint problems safely. Leave the building until all work is finished and a thorough cleanup is done.
- 6) Don't bring lead dust into your home; if you work with lead in your job or hobby, change your clothes before you go home; try to keep your children from eating dirt and make sure they wash their hands when they come inside.
- 7) Test your drinking water for lead. If your water hasn't been tested or has high levels of lead:
  - Don't drink, cook or make baby formula with water from the hot water tap;
  - Run cold water for 30 to 60 seconds before drinking it or using it for cooking;
  - Consider buying a filter certified for lead removal.  
(See EPA hot-line 1-800-227-8917)
- 8) Eat a nutritious diet. A child who gets enough iron and calcium will absorb less lead. Foods rich in iron include organ meats such as liver, eggs, lean red meat, fortified cereals and beans. Dairy products and green vegetables such as spinach and broccoli are high in calcium.

**South Dakota Department of Health  
Office of Health Protection**

600 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501  
1-800-738-2301

**Department of Environment and  
Natural Resources**

523 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501  
(605) 773-3754 - information on drinking water  
(605) 773-3153 – information on lead based paint

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

Safe Drinking Water Hot-line  
1-800-426-4791  
1-800-227-8917  
[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov) (lead)

**National Lead Information Center**

1-800-LEADFYI (1-800-532-3395)

The Sanford Poison Center is a free, confidential 24-hour poison emergency helpline. You can call the Center to get help in a poison emergency from poison experts. They can tell you what to do if you, your child or pet is poisoned.

**For more information on poison safety  
or to order educational materials,  
call the Sanford Poison Center at  
(605) 328-6670 or visit our website  
at [www.sanfordhealth.org](http://www.sanfordhealth.org) or  
[www.sdpoison.org](http://www.sdpoison.org)**

## Childhood lead poisoning in South Dakota

About one in eleven children in the United States have high levels of lead in their blood. At levels above 10 micrograms per deciliter of whole blood (ug/dl), lead can cause learning disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing, and even brain damage. If caught early, these effects can be limited by reducing exposure to lead or by medical treatment.

## Who is at risk?

Children are at a greater risk because their bodies and nervous systems are still developing and because they absorb and retain more ingested lead for their body weight than adults. Because they frequently put their hands in their mouths, they also have increased exposure to lead in the environment, especially in dust and soil containing lead.

## Children are at a particular risk of lead exposure if they:

- Live in or regularly visit buildings built before 1978 that have peeling or chipping paint or where there is recent renovation or remodeling (the home, a day care center, preschool, the home of a baby sitter, friend or relative, etc.);
- Have a brother, sister, housemate, or playmate being treated for lead poisoning (blood level higher than 15 ug/dl);
- Live with an adult who refinishes furniture, repairs automobiles, makes stained glass windows or pottery, or has another job or hobby using lead;

- Live near an active lead smelter, battery recycling plant, or other industry likely to release lead.

## Symptoms:

- A person can be lead poisoned and not even know it, because often there are no signs or symptoms or they may be mistaken for symptoms of flu or other illness. The following are symptoms that may occur:
  - crankiness or irritability
  - restless, persistent tiredness
  - dizziness
  - tired a lot
  - sick to his or her stomach or stomach discomfort
  - loss of appetite
  - muscle weakness
  - reduced attention span
  - insomnia
  - constipation
- As more lead accumulates, clumsiness, weakness, and loss of recently acquired skills can occur.
- Failure to treat children in the early stages can cause long-term or permanent health damage.
- But don't wait for signs like these. By then, it may be too late to prevent lasting harm.
- A child can be hurt by lead and still look fine.

## Lead may be found in:

- Any house or apartment built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint.
- Dust
- Tap Water
- Ceramic dishes
- Lead crystal
- Glazed pottery
- Fishing weights
- Cans
- Pencils
- Shotgun & lead bullets
- Lead plates in batteries
- Drinking fountains (hauling tanks with seams of lead based solder)
- Crayons (made in a different country)
- Plastic bread bags (ink used to print the bags)
- Cast iron enamel bathtubs

## What can I do?

The good news is there are some simple things you can do to protect your family from lead poisoning.

- 1) Get your child tested. Without testing, there is no way to tell whether a child has lead poisoning.
- 2) Follow the testing guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
  - Test high risk children at 6 months;
  - Test low risk children at age 12 to 15 months;
  - All children should have follow-up screenings, as recommended.