

What Do Childcare Providers Need to Know to Protect Children from Lead Exposure?

Lead poisoning is a preventable disease caused by exposure to lead which can be in paint, soil, dust, or water. It can cause damage to a child's physical and mental well-being, sometimes with irreversible effects. Child care providers play an important role in protecting young children from the risks of lead.

Why are Young Children at Risk?

- Children explore the environment using their hands and mouths.
- They spend a lot of time on the floor where sources of lead are found.
- Their brains and bodies are still growing and developing.
- Children absorb more lead than adults.

Sources of Lead in Homes and Daycare Centers

- Chipping and peeling lead-based paint, usually in homes, and buildings built before 1978
- Lead in soil
- Some home remedies like Greta and Azarcon
- Lead dust brought home on clothes by persons working in construction or industry
- Some imported food, candy and spices
- Some handmade or imported pottery/dishes, old painted toys, some jewelry, some art supplies

Child Care Providers Can Take Simple Steps to Protect Children from Lead

- **Promote good nutrition.** Healthy bodies resist the effects of lead better. Offer foods rich in calcium, iron, and Vitamin C.
- **Wash hands & toys.** Wash children's hands before meals/snacks. Wash toys frequently.
- **Clean your shoes.** Soil is often contaminated with lead. Use a rough mat for wiping feet or go shoe-free inside where allowable.
- **Remove recalled toys, jewelry, and furniture.** Stay up-to-date on current recalls by visiting the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Web site: <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.
- **Maintain paint to prevent flaking or peeling by washing all areas around doors and windows.** Paint over old flaking paint with low VOC paint. Use lead-safe work practices.
- **Use cold water from the sink.** Many older homes have water pipes made with lead solder. Cold water is much less likely to leach lead from the pipes. Run cold water for 15-30 seconds, or until it feels colder, before using for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula.
- **Avoid these products:** Imported, old, or handmade pottery. Toy metal jewelry. Artificial turf. Vinyl products like rubber ducks, some children's raincoats.
- **Educate parents.** Families should follow these same precautions at home. Also, all children should have a blood test for lead at the ages of 1 and 2 years.
- **Use safer Art Supplies.** Only use art supplies that have an Art and Creative Materials, Inc. (ACMI) approved cap seal.

You can test your toys for lead yourself. Lead testing kits are available at hardware stores or on-line for \$10-\$12.

The **Marin County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP)** works to reduce lead exposure and to increase the number of children assessed and appropriately tested for lead poisoning. We provide home visiting, health education, and environmental investigation services to the families of children with high blood lead levels. Visit our website for additional resources: <https://www.marinhhs.org/marin-county-lead-poisoning-prevention-program> or contact CLPPP Coordinator Maureen De Nieva at mdenieva@marincounty.org or (415) 473-6731.