

Preventing Lead Poisoning In The Home

Facts

- As the winter months arrive, and people begin spending more time indoors, indoor air quality becomes a health concern. One health hazard associated with indoor air quality is the potential for lead poisoning in children and adults during renovation and remodeling activities.
- Common sources of lead in homes or buildings built before 1978 include lead contaminated dust and lead-based paint. Other sources of lead in homes are soil, food, water and folk medicines or remedies.
- Remodeling activities may generate large amounts of lead dust that may be distributed throughout a home by the HVAC system or by foot traffic.
- Lead poisoning generally affects the central nervous system, leading to learning and behavioral disorders, and it can also damage the kidneys and reproductive organs.
- There is no known "safe" level of lead exposure, so it's important to protect yourself and your family during any renovation or remodeling activities in your home.

Safe Behavior

- Lead paint was available to use in homes until 1978. "Lead-check" paint swabs can be purchased at local hardware and paint stores to test for lead paint. You may want to hire an inspector to test for lead paint. You can find inspectors on the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) website or call MDH for a list.
- If you suspect your home may contain lead paint, keep your home as dust-free as possible. Wipe down windows with a damp sponge and cleaning solution. Clean floors with a damp sponge and cleaning solution or use a disposable damp mop.
- Do not use your household vacuum to clean up paint chips or leaded dust. The filter in your household vacuum cleaner is not designed to pick up and hold small pieces of lead. Using a regular vacuum cleaner will spread lead dust into the air.
- Children are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning. Don't let your child eat or chew on anything you think may have paint on it. Look for teeth marks on the woodwork in your home.
- Wash your child's hands with soap and water before eating, naps and bedtime.
- Wash bottles, teething rings and toys with soap and water.
- If you think you may have lead in your water, use only cold water for cooking or drinking. Let the cold water run for a couple of minutes each time the water has been sitting in the pipes for six or more hours.
- If you hire a contractor to do renovation work in your home, they must be certified by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for renovation and provide you with EPA's "Renovate Right" booklet before any work takes place. Ask about the specific methods that will be used to keep lead paint chip and dust generation to a minimum.

Additional Materials

- **Minnesota Department of Health**
 - What is Lead Poisoning? [English](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Somali](#)
 - Common Sources of Lead [English](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Somali](#)
 - [Help to Make Lead Poisoning a Thing of the Past](#)
 - Cleaning Up Sources of Lead in the Home [English](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Hmong](#) - [Somali](#)

- Steps to Help Lower Your Child's Blood Lead Level [English](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Hmong](#) - [Somali](#)
- Lead Exposure During Pregnancy & Breastfeeding [English](#) (Spanish and Hmong – coming soon)
- [Remodeling the Older Home series](#) – These 11 fact sheets covers topics such as Testing The Home For Lead, Removing And Covering Interior Paint, Replacing Doors, Windows and Trim and other topics that homeowners need when they remodel.
- [Healthy Homes](#)
- **University of Minnesota Extension Service**
 - Lead - Your Safe Home [Spanish/English](#) - [Hmong/English](#) - [Cambodian/English](#) - [Laotian/English](#)
- **US Environmental Protection Agency**
 - Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home – 16-page booklet offers tips on what lead poisoning is, how it occurs, who is most at risk and how to avoid lead poisoning, among other lead related issues. [English](#) - [Spanish](#) - [Russian](#) - [Arabic](#) - [Somali](#) - [Vietnamese](#)

Contact

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