



## What is Lead?

Lead is a heavy metal and basic chemical element. Lead is also a poison. It can slow mental and physical growth and make you very sick. For these reasons, knowing where lead might show up in your environment can help you to avoid contact with it!

Childhood lead poisoning is still one of the most important health issues in the United States today. According to recent CDC estimates, approximately half a million U.S. children age 1-5 have elevated blood lead levels. 4 million households have children living in them that are being exposed to high levels of lead. More than 1 in 5 African-American children living in housing build before 1946 have elevated blood lead levels. Lead poisoning can be so subtle that the affected child may not show any clear physical signs. Therefore, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend screening all children at age 1. Children living in high risk areas or populations for lead exposures should be screened until age 5.

## Who We Are: CEC

### About Us

The Community Engagement Core (CEC) at the Center of Excellence in Environmental Toxicology at the University of Pennsylvania works to provide research information from the Center's research team to community, professional, and Public Health decision-makers in order to improve clinical and public health. Concerned with the effects on vulnerable populations including children, the elderly, and underserved populations, the CEC develops models and approaches to community environmental health. The CEC brings community concerns to the Center to spark environmental research ideas that affect the community's health.

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**Lead:  
It's Still a  
Problem**

Community Engagement Core  
(CEC)

Center of Excellence in Environmental  
Toxicology (CEET)



## Did You Know?

- Lead poisoning is a very common problem for young children.
- Lead tastes sweet, which make children want to eat it.
- Peeling lead paint especially from windows end up on floors.
- Children under the age of 3 are at high risk because they crawl or play on the floor.

*“66% of Homes in the US Still Contain Lead.”*

## What happens if a child is lead poisoned?

Slowed growth, hearing loss, learning problems, behavior problems.

### Sources of Lead and What You Can Do

#### House Paint

- Homes built before 1977 likely contain lead-based paint and old paint flakes off.
- Don't sand off old paint. Let your landlord know about chipping paint.
- Wet mop dust often

#### Soil

- Soil (dirt) near heavily-used streets, old homes, old factories, and even playgrounds may contain lead.
- Wash hands after playing outside.
- Hand sanitizer does not remove lead.

#### Drinking Water

- Lead may get into drinking water when materials used in plumbing contain lead. Well water can become contaminated at anytime.
- Run the water for 10 minutes before drinking, cooking, or making baby formula.
- Test well water annually.

#### Others

- Lead is also found in some imported children's toys, candy, and cosmetics
- Be aware of the items you are buying and consuming.
- Dust accumulation may contain lead. This can come from old paint, dirty clothes, and demolition
- Take shoes and dirty clothing off before entering a home.
- Wet wipe surfaces often



## Are you Pregnant or Thinking about Having a Baby? You Should Get Tested for Lead Too!

Lead poisoning is caused by breathing or swallowing lead. This can cause lead to pass from a mother to her unborn baby. There is no safe blood lead level. Lead exposure has been shown to cause negative health affects in nearly every system in the body.

Too much lead in a pregnant mother's body can put her at risk for miscarriage, cause the baby to be born early or too small, cause the child to develop learning or behavior problems, and damage the baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system.

Watch out for sources of lead in your home, and talk to your doctor about getting screened today.

## Taking Action

Beginning December 21, 2012, the Lead Paint Disclosure and Certification Law requires Philadelphia landlords to ensure that property rented to families with children 6 years and younger is lead safe.

On October 25, 2018, a bill amendment was introduced to require all rental properties, regardless of family status to be lead safe.

The CEC supports improving lead regulations by providing science-based health information through public comments, city testimonials, issue briefs, and education.