



How To: Understand Lead Soil Concentrations

Lead is naturally occurring in soil at very low amounts, commonly below 40 parts per million (ppm). High soil lead levels pose a risk of human lead exposure. Lead is especially a hazard to children and pregnant women because of lead’s toxic effects on the developing brain. Soil near homes and structures painted with lead-based paint are at risk of contamination due to flaking and weathering. Soil near busy roads may have been exposed to lead-gasoline vehicles in the past.

Reminder of current EPA regulations:

- 400 ppm for bare soil in play areas
- 1,200 ppm for non-play areas

Soil Lead Level (ppm)	Level of Lead Contamination	What this means to you
Less than 150	None to very low	Little to no health risk. However, remain aware that other possible sources of lead may exist.
From 150 to 400	Low	Reduce children’s exposure and play Wash hands after playing outside Maintain grass, or mulch, over bare soil Discourage children’s play. Gardens: wash all vegetables with 1% vinegar solution; peel root crops; do not compost peelings/leaves
From 400 to 1,000	Medium	Restrict children’s access to soil. Cover soil with dense grass, or mulch. Gardens: grow vegetables in raised beds filled with non-contaminated soil
From 1,000 to 2,000	High	Do not allow children to access soil. Do not grow vegetables.
Greater than 2,000	Very High	Contact your local health department

If you have questions regarding your lead soil concentrations, please contact the CEC Coordinator **Adrian Wood** [e-mail: adrian.wood@pennterms.upenn.edu; Phone: 215.898.6221]