



## How to Reduce Lead Exposure

Learn how to protect yourself and others from becoming sick from lead in the environment.

### How can I protect my family from lead in the environment?

There is no safe level of lead exposure. The most important way you can lower exposures to lead is to know the sources of lead in and around your home and to take steps to eliminate them. Sources in the home can include:

- Lead-contaminated soil and dust.
- Lead-based paint chips.
- Water from lead-based pipes.
- Some lead-based consumer products made outside of the U.S.

You can help protect yourself and your family from lead around your home by following these steps:

- Regularly wash your hands and face, especially before meals and after working or playing outside. This removes lead dust from the skin.
- Regularly clean your home of dust and tracked-in soil. Door mats can help lower the amount of soil that is tracked inside. You can also remove your shoes before going inside your home.
- Cover areas of bare soil in your yard by planting grass and shrubs or by putting down ground cover such as gravel. This will protect children and pets that play outdoors and will keep lead dust down.
- Wash all produce before eating and limit the amount of root vegetables (beets, carrots, potatoes, etc.) you eat if you know or suspect they were grown in lead-contaminated soil.
- Remove outerwear like shoes, gloves, and jackets outside home and bag up. Remove other soiled clothes, just inside the home, and bag up to keep from tracking soil inside. Wash your hands and if possible, shower when you come inside.
- Ensure that children have proper nutrition and are eating a balanced diet of foods that supply enough vitamins and minerals. Good nutrition lowers the amount of swallowed lead that passes into a child's bloodstream and can reduce some of the toxic effects of lead.

### How does the federal government protect my health from lead in the environment?

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) air quality standard requires that the

concentration of lead in the air in public areas to be no higher than 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) averaged over 3 months.

- The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 banned the sale of leaded gasoline as of December 31, 1995.
- The U.S. EPA also requires testing of public water systems for lead. If more than 10% of the samples at residences contain lead levels over 15 parts-per-billion (ppb), actions must be taken to lower these levels.
- The Lead Contamination Control Act of 1988 (LCCA) was created to help reduce lead in drinking water at schools and daycare centers through lead monitoring and reporting requirements.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has banned the use of lead in food packaging and set action levels regarding lead in food items, cosmetics, and bottled water. FDA's lead in bottled water action level is 5 ppb.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires that federally funded housing and renovations to be tested for lead-based paint hazards.
- The U.S. EPA has established 200 parts-per-million (ppm) for lead in bare soils in play areas and 1,200 ppm for non-play areas federally funded projects.

### References

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). 2020. [Lead ToxFAQs](#).

### Where can I get more information?

Ohio Department of Health  
Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation  
Protection  
Health Assessment Section  
Phone: (614) 728-9452  
Email: [BEH@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:BEH@odh.ohio.gov)

Ohio Department of Health  
Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation  
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