



**CLARK COUNTY**  
WASHINGTON

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**PUBLIC HEALTH**

# What parents need to know about lead and their kids

Exposure to lead can result in elevated levels of lead in the bloodstream. There is no known safe level of lead in the human body. Even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in behavioral and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems and anemia, and can lead to seizures, coma, and even death, in rare cases.

## Main causes of lead exposure

Most lead exposures in children are traced back to the home. Lead-based paint and its dust, most commonly found in homes built before 1978, are the biggest sources of lead exposure in kids.

## Other potential causes of lead exposure at home:

- Contaminated yard soil
- Drinking water plumbing
- Adult hobbies and collectibles (e.g. ammunition reloading, handmade pottery, antiques)
- Metal objects (e.g. jewelry, keys)
- Imported traditional health remedies and cosmetics (e.g. azarcon, greta, kohl, paylooah, sindhoor, kumkuma).

## Those at risk:

- Kids younger than 6 are highest risk because they often put their hands and objects in their mouths
- Kids are also at higher risk for permanent physical and cognitive damage from lead exposure, due to their developing bodies and brains
- Anyone, especially those younger than 6, living in older homes (built before 1978) with signs of deteriorated paint, especially around doors and windows
- Anyone working and/or living in a pre-1978 home being renovated or remodeled

## What parents can do:

- Have a health care provider perform a blood test to check your kid's blood-lead level.
- Keep kids away from peeling paint and plaster. The lead dust can get on toys and hands. Then, when kids put their hands or toys in their mouths, the lead is swallowed. Wash hands and toys that are exposed to peeling paint or plaster to remove lead dust.
- Test your home drinking water and yard soil for lead (contact Clark County Public Health for more information).
- Keep hobbies and occupations involving lead outside of the home. Take steps to avoid tracking lead into the home on clothes or hobby/occupation materials.
- Keep young kids from putting metal objects and antique collectibles in their mouths.

## More information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>

US Environmental Protection Agency  
<https://www.epa.gov/lead>

Speak with a local  
lead specialist

Clark County Public Health  
564.397.8153

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For other formats, contact the Clark County ADA Office

Voice: 564.397.2322 / Relay: 711 or 800.833.6388 / Fax: 564.397.6165 / Email: [ADA@clark.wa.gov](mailto:ADA@clark.wa.gov)