

Safe Lead Awareness

Lead is a metal that occurs naturally in the environment. Although it can be found in small amounts in the earth's crust, most lead comes from man-made activities such as manufacturing and mining. In the past, lead has been used in gasoline, paint, metals, ammunition, and batteries. In recent years, because of its hazardous health effects, lead has been banned or significantly reduced in these products.

Lead Based Paint

If a home or building was built before 1978, it is likely to contain lead-based paint. In 1978, the federal government banned consumer use of lead-containing paint. Lead from paint, including lead-contaminated dust, is one of the most common causes of lead poisoning.



Common Sources of Lead Exposure in Adults

- * Removal, demolition, and renovation of structures painted with lead pigments
- * Installation, maintenance, or demolition of lead pipes
- * Soldering
- * Plumbing Fixtures
- * Leaded glass
- * Firing lead bullets

Potential Health Effects of Lead Poisoning

Inhalation: Lead dust and fume can be absorbed through the lungs. Local irritation of bronchia and lungs can occur. In cases of high short-term exposure, symptoms such as metallic taste, chest and abdominal pain, and increased blood lead levels may follow.

Ingestion: POISON. The symptoms of lead poisoning include abdominal pain and spasms, nausea, vomiting and headache. Acute poisoning can lead to muscle weakness, metallic taste, loss of appetite, insomnia, dizziness, high levels of lead in blood and urine, coma and death in extreme cases.

Skin Contact: Lead may be absorbed through the skin after prolonged exposure. Contact over short periods may cause local irritation.

Eye Contact: May cause eye irritation.

Signs and Symptoms of Exposure

Acute (short term) exposure: Lead is a potent, systemic poison; taken in large enough doses, lead can kill in a matter of days. Acute encephalopathy (brain disease) may arise which develops quickly to seizures, coma and death from cardiorespiratory arrest.

Chronic (long term) exposure: Chronic overexposure to lead may result in severe damage to blood forming, nervous, urinary and reproductive systems. Some common symptoms of chronic overexposure include loss of appetite, metallic taste in mouth, anxiety, constipation, nausea, pale appearance, excessive tiredness, weakness, insomnia, headache, nervous irritability, muscle & joint pain, fine tremors, numbness, dizziness, hyperactivity, and colic.