

**GET THE
LEAD**

OUT

PREVENTION

How to protect children
against lead poisoning

Illinois Department of
Public Health

Of the 1.2 million children aged 6 years and younger in Illinois, approximately 110,000 children have blood lead levels that are too high.

Lead poisoning does not always produce symptoms. It can be detected with a simple blood test.

Because lead is found everywhere, city, suburban and rural children are all at risk if they breathe in lead dust or eat lead paint and dust.

Read this brochure to find out more about lead poisoning. Call your doctor, your local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 217-782-0403 or 800-545-2200 or TTY 800-547-0466 for information on having your home inspected for lead and removing lead hazards safely.

**HAVE YOUR CHILD TESTED FOR
LEAD POISONING.**

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WHAT IS LEAD POISONING?

Lead poisoning is too much lead in the body. Lead is especially harmful to the small bodies of children younger than 6 years old.

Lead gets in their bodies when children eat lead or breathe it in. Lead is in —

- paint
- dust
- drinking water
- dirt outside

HOW DOES LEAD AFFECT A CHILD?

Even small amounts of lead can harm a child's brain, kidneys and stomach. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavior problems.

Your child may have lead poisoning and not feel sick. Or your child may have stomach aches, headaches, a poor appetite or trouble sleeping, or be cranky, tired or restless.

SCREEN YOUR CHILD FOR LEAD.

All children 6 months through 6 years old should be assessed for their risk for lead poisoning. Illinois state law requires all children entering day care, nursery school, preschool or kindergarten to provide proof of a blood lead test or an assessment.

A screening test is done with blood taken from the finger or vein. If too much lead is in the blood, your child may need treatment. To find out how to test your child, call your doctor or local health department.

Women planning to have a baby should be tested for lead. Lead in a mother's body can cause a baby to be born too small and too early.

PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM LEAD.

Wash your children's hands before they eat.

Foods high in iron and calcium — lean meat, eggs, raisins, greens, milk, cheese, fruit and potatoes — help get lead *out* of a child's system. Limit foods high in fat and oil — fried foods and snacks like potato chips — which *keep* lead in a child's system.

Clean up chipping and peeling paint inside and outside your home.

Clean up paint chips and lead dust in window sills and on the floor near windows, doorways and woodwork. Use a damp mop or cloth and a cleaning product.

Wash your child's toys often. Throw away lead-painted toys.

Do not store food in open cans or pottery.

If you work with lead, shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash your work clothes separately.

Run cold water for a few minutes before using it for cooking and drinking. Do not use water from the hot water tap for cooking, drinking or making formula.

IF YOU THINK YOUR HOME HAS LEAD PAINT.

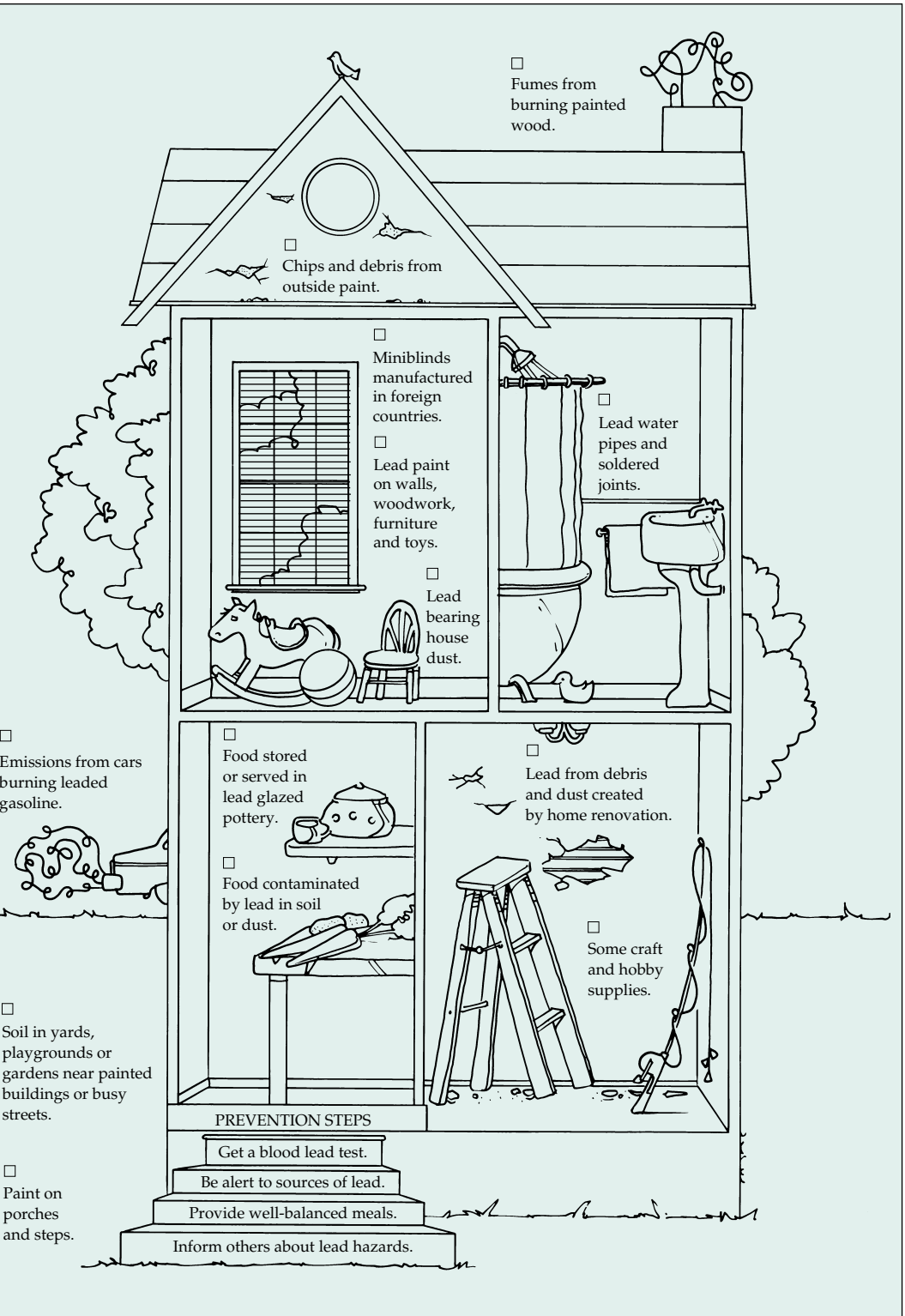
Removing lead paint is very dangerous. Do not do it yourself. Call your local health department or the Illinois Department of Public Health's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 217-782-0403 or 800-545-2200 or TTY 800-547-0466 for information on how to remove lead paint safely.

YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE LEAD POISONING IF —

- He lives in or visits a home built before 1978 with peeling or chipping paint.
- She has been around dust from sanding or removing old paint.
- You live near a highway or industry that uses lead.
- You have lead water pipes or fixtures.
- You live with someone who works with lead.

Other sources of lead are foods grown in contaminated soil; foods stored in hand-made pottery or open cans; bullets; fishing sinkers; and hobbies that use lead, such as ceramics and stained glass.





**ALL CHILDREN AGES 6 MONTHS THROUGH 6 YEARS
SHOULD BE ASSESSED FOR LEAD POISONING EVERY YEAR.**

For further information, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

800-545-2200
217-782-0403
TTY 800-547-0466

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Public Health**

535 W. Jefferson St.
Springfield, IL 62761

Printed by the Authority of the State of Illinois
P.O. #372437 30M 4/02



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