



LEAD AND PREGNANCY KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

Exposure to lead is a serious health concern, especially for an unborn baby. Lead is stored in bone, so even if your lead exposure occurred in the past, you can still have it in your body and pass it to your baby during pregnancy. Take steps to minimize your exposure to lead by following these tips.

DO



See your medical provider

Your provider will use a risk assessment questionnaire to determine if you should be tested for lead.



Have children tested

If you are at risk for lead exposure or tested positive for lead, your other children and new born baby should be evaluated and tested by their provider.



Eat a healthy diet

Eat a variety of foods rich in calcium, iron and vitamin C. Eating nutritious foods helps the body block lead absorption.



Home cleaning

Clean windowsills, floors, and other surfaces using soap and water to minimize house dust. Wash hands well and often.



Get your water tested

Lead can be present in your plumbing system, especially if your home was built before 1987. Until your water has been tested and any identified sources of lead have been removed, use bottled water or water treated with a filter certified to remove lead for cooking and drinking to reduce possible exposure to lead.



DON'T



Don't use imported items

Avoid using health remedies, foods, candy, spices, cosmetics, pottery, toys, and other items made outside the U.S. as they may contain lead.



Don't eat non-food items

Never eat or chew on clay, dirt, pottery, or other non-food items. These may contain lead.



Don't take lead home

If someone uses or works with lead (e.g. auto repair, plumbing, construction, firing range), lead dust can be carried home on the body and clothes. Have them shower and change before entering the home or interacting with small children.



Don't remove lead or renovate yourself

Homes built prior to 1978 may contain lead paint. If lead is found in your home, do not try to remove it or do home renovations yourself. Hire an expert who is certified in lead removal to be sure lead safe practices are used.

Lead can cause your baby to be born too early or too small. It can even cause miscarriage.

dph.illinois.gov/illinoislead
Lead Program Hotline: 866-909-3572



Lead can damage your baby's developing brain, kidneys, and nervous system. It can also cause learning and behavior problems.

Adapted with permission from the New Mexico Department of Health.

