

The Word on the Street about Childhood Lead Poisoning for Tenants

What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning means that you have too much lead in your body. Lead can be found in your blood, soft tissues and in your bones. If lead levels in the blood stream are high, there can be serious health risks.

Who gets lead poisoned?

Anyone can get lead poisoned. Kids under 6 years old are at greater risk though. Pregnant women can even pass lead to their unborn babies. ☹️

Where does lead come from?

Lead is an element. It comes from nature in the form of an ore called *galena*. Through the ages, lead has been used in pottery, glassware and even combined with silver to make pewter. Perhaps those pirates who drank their rum from pewter mugs got lead poisoned too! Lead was used as an additive in gasoline and paints among many other uses.

Where is lead found?

Today, lead is primarily found in houses built before 1978, since most of these houses contain leaded paint. Lead can also be found in soil and in water, however the biggest problem is lead dust. Lead dust is often created during renovation or remodeling in a home when a lead painted surface is disturbed. However, a simple task like opening a window or opening a door can also create these tiny lead dust particles.

Why is lead so dangerous?

When high levels of lead get into your blood stream severe health problems can arise. Learning and behavioral problems can occur. And physically, a child can get kidney damage or high lead levels can even result in damage to their nervous system or brain.

Are there ways to prevent lead poisoning?

Perhaps the best thing to do is to make sure that your children wash their hands before meals, snacks and before bed. Lead dust particles on their tiny fingers often make their way into their mouths. Have your children tested. A simple

blood test will let you know if your child has an elevated lead level. All children should be tested at one and two years old and every year up to six if possible. Avoid sanding or scraping paint, since the dust you create may have lead in it and that dust will eventually cover everything. Clean up areas where kids play with a soapy detergent and water. Clean window sills and wells with baby wipes. Use a vacuum cleaner with a quality HEPA-filter system. And take off your shoes when you come into your house.

Does lead get into the soil?

Yes. Lead gets into the soil from chipping and peeling paint. Lead paint disturbed during a remodeling project is the major cause of lead in the soil. The dangerous lead dust settles into the soil next to your house and in your yard where your kids might play or where you might plant your vegetable garden. Lead in the soil is often brought inside your house on your child's hands, the bottoms of their shoes, from pets and from clothing if the kids are playing in contaminated soil.

Removing shoes when coming inside and washing your child's hands before snacks and

meals, after outdoor play and before bedtime reduces the risk of lead poisoning. Like we say to all of the kids, "Don't be a dope, use some soap"!



How can a tenant get help? If you live in the City in a 1 to 4 family house, and your apartment has chipping and peeling paint, and you have children under six or someone pregnant in your household, please call the **Onondaga County Health Department at 435-3271**. They will send an inspector to check and verify your complaint. Assuming that you are on "good terms" with your landlord, let him/her know about the **City's Lead Program at 448-8710**. We may have financial assistance available for your landlord to help make your apartment free of hazardous lead.

How about giving me some useful phone numbers for lead-related assistance?

Sure...For help and if you live in the City please call the **City's Lead Hazard Control Program at 448-8710**.

For information about getting your child's blood tested, or if you have chipping and peeling paint

**in your apartment, call the Onondaga County
Health Department at 435-3271**

Being lead-smart...it's a great start!

