

# How to Prevent Lead Poisoning in Keiki

There is no safe level of lead for a child. Even a little lead in a child's blood can hurt their ability to learn, pay attention, and do well in school.

The good news is that lead poisoning is preventable. Learn about lead sources and how to keep children away from lead. If your child has lead in their blood, there are many things you can do to help.

## Know the common sources of lead

Lead can be found where children live, play, and learn.



**Paint.** In homes or buildings built before 1978, assume that the paint contains lead unless tests show otherwise. When paint peels and cracks, it makes lead paint chips and dust. Children can be exposed to lead if they eat flaking paint chips or put things like toys or fingers in their mouths covered with lead dust. You can't see lead dust.



**Dirt.** Lead from old paint, leaded gasoline, plane fuel, and lead industries can settle in dirt and last for years. Children can be exposed to lead in dirt by swallowing or breathing in dirt with lead in it while playing. This dirt can also get on shoes and clothes and be brought into the home or other places where children spend time.



**Water.** Some water pipes, faucets, and plumbing fixtures may contain lead that can get into drinking water. Lead from catchment systems can be released if not well-maintained.



**Consumer products.** Lead can be found in old toys, jewelry, antiques, and collectible items. Some ceramics, china, and porcelain also contain lead, which might get into food.



**Imported foods and medicines.** Some candies, candy wrappers, spices, cosmetics, traditional medicines, and ceremonial or religious powders purchased or brought from outside the US contain lead.



**Jobs and hobbies.** Certain jobs and hobbies, such as fishing, construction, painting, plumbing, electrical work, welding, and car repair, use lead-based products and can be brought into the home by parents or caregivers.



More information about sources of lead can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources.htm>

Call us for help. It's free and easy!

Materials developed by CDC




# Take steps to prevent lead exposure

There are many things you can do to protect your family from lead exposure.

## Make your home lead-safe

- **Check your home.** Test for lead paint in your home or anywhere children spend a lot of time. Do not mess with paint unless you are sure there is no lead.
- **Get rid of dust.** Use wet paper towels, a wet mop, and a HEPA vacuum to clean if you think you might have lead paint. Don't sweep. Contact paper or duct tape can be used to cover paint that is falling apart. Call us for help at 808-733-9012.
- **Renovate safely.** Home repairs and renovations, such as sanding or scraping paint in homes built before 1978, can release lead dust. If you are planning renovations, use only approved methods for removing lead hazards from your home and use contractors certified by the Environmental Protection Agency (visit [epa.gov/lead](http://epa.gov/lead) for information).
- **Check your drinking water.** Don't use the hot water tap for cooking, drinking, or baby formula. If you use catchment water for drinking, keep your system well-maintained and test water for lead. If there is lead in your tap water, take steps to reduce or stop exposure.

## Make sure your things don't have lead in them

- **Avoid old toys.** Watch out for anything bought from yard sales, thrift stores, or passed down from family and friends.  
  
Remember, old toys made before 2012 were never tested for lead.
- **Don't let children play with things made for adults.** Keep work gear and hobby supplies out of reach. Souvenirs, jewelry, magnets, antiques, and anything not made just for children may have lead in it.
- **Be safe in the kitchen.** Some imported or antique ceramics and pottery dishes are glazed with lead. This glaze might contaminate food when stored or prepared in these dishes.
- **Avoid certain traditional medicines and cosmetics.** Avoid using traditional medicines (such as azarcon, greta, and pay-loo-ah) and cosmetics (such as kohl and sindoor) that contain lead. If you are not sure if a product contains lead, do not use it.
- **Use caution when eating certain foods.** Avoid eating spices, candies, and other foods that were purchased abroad from informal or unregulated sources. Foods that were made following local rules are more likely to be safe for children.

## Take everyday steps to stay healthy

- **Give children safe areas to play.** Don't let children play in dirt or places where paint is falling apart. Cover dirt with grass, mulch, or wood chips.
- **Give children healthy foods.** A balanced diet with foods that provide calcium, iron, and vitamin C may help keep lead out of the body. Many of these foods can be bought with food vouchers from WIC. To learn more, call your child's doctor or go to [health.hawaii.gov/wic/](http://health.hawaii.gov/wic/)
- **Wash hands and toys.** Make sure children wash hands before eating or after playing outside. Remember, sanitizer doesn't work on lead. Wash toys and pacifiers to get rid of lead dust.
- **Remove shoes when you enter a home.** Take shoes off when you enter a home to prevent bringing lead dust in from outside.
- **Be safe when working with lead.** If you or someone who lives with you works with lead, have them change into clean clothing before coming home. Keep their work or activity shoes and tools outside and wash their clothes separately from the rest of your family's clothes. Don't melt lead or cast fishing sinkers near where children live or play.

# Get your keiki tested for lead exposure

Talk to your child's doctor about getting a finger prick lead test. If your child has lead in their blood, we will work with your family and your child's doctor to find the lead source, and connect you with the right kind of help. Call us at 808-733-9012 today.

Visit [cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/blood-lead-levels.htm](http://cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/blood-lead-levels.htm) to learn about lead testing.

