



# Lead

## What is lead?

Lead is a heavy metal that occurs naturally in the Earth's crust. It is found in a variety of places including old buildings, drinking water, and soil. Exposure to lead can be very dangerous, especially for children, but precautions can be taken to avoid contact.

## How to prevent exposure

- MA Lead Law requires that all children be tested for lead between the ages of 9-12 months, and again at ages 2 and 3.
- Practice good nutrition! Give children plenty of calcium and iron.

### ➤ Lead paint

- Inspect and maintain all painted surfaces.
- Clean around painted areas where friction occurs (doors, windows).
- Keep your home dust-free.
- Take extra precautions when renovating (search for "Don't Spread Lead" guide).

### ➤ Lead in drinking water

- Address water damage quickly and completely.
- Flush water outlets used for drinking or food preparation.
- Use only cold water to prepare food and drinks.

### ➤ Lead in soil

- Teach children to wipe and remove their shoes and wash their hands after playing outdoors.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.

## Ask questions

- How old is the home or childcare facility, and is the paint in good condition? If it was built before 1978, there is a higher chance that lead is present.
- Does the landlord keep common areas clean?
- Has the landlord tested the water?
- Has another child in the building tested high in blood lead level?

## Know your rights

- Legally, landlords must disclose their knowledge of lead!
- You have the right to test a home/apartment before buying/renting.
- If the landlord is renovating, they must follow lead-safe guidelines.

## If you're concerned about lead at home or in a childcare setting

- BPHC provides environmental investigations and case management services for families with children who have elevated blood lead levels.
- BPHC also conducts investigations for parents and property owners who request a lead paint inspection.
- Please call 617-534-5965.

## Is there financial assistance for deleading?

- Massachusetts' Get the Lead Out program provides low cost financing to owners of 1-4 family properties to remove lead paint and reduce possible exposure to children. Call 617-854-1000.

Boston Public Health  
Commission  
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For more information, please call:

Environmental Health Office: 617-534-5965

