

# Are You Pregnant?

## PREVENT LEAD POISONING START NOW

Lead poisoning is caused by breathing in or swallowing items contaminated with lead. Lead can pass from a mother to her unborn baby. The good news is that **lead poisoning is preventable**.

### Too much lead in your body can

- Put you at risk for miscarriage.
- Cause your baby to be born too early or too small.
- Hurt your baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system.
- Cause your child to have learning or behavior problems.

### Lead can be found in

- Paint and dust in older homes, especially dust from renovation or repairs.
- Candy, cosmetics, glazed pots, and some traditional medicines and spices from other countries.
- Certain jobs such as auto refinishing, construction, and plumbing.
- Toys and jewelry.
- Soil and drinking water from lead pipes, faucets, and plumbing fixtures.



# Now is the time to keep you and your baby safe from lead poisoning. Here's what you can do:

**1 Watch out for lead in your home.** Most lead comes from paint in homes built before 1978. When old paint cracks and peels, it creates lead dust and lead chips. The dust is so small you cannot see it. You can breathe in lead dust and not even know it.

Home repairs and renovations, such as sanding or scraping paint, in homes built before 1978 can make lead dust.

If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, leave the house when someone is

- Removing lead paint.
- Cleaning up after removing lead paint.
- Remodeling a room that might have lead paint.

**Tip:** If you live in a home built before 1978, have your home inspected by a licensed lead inspector. Find a certified inspector or risk assessor at <https://www.epa.gov/lead>.

**2 Avoid certain jobs or hobbies.** Some jobs can expose you to lead, such as construction and renovation or repair of homes built before 1978, and battery manufacturing or recycling. Some hobbies can expose you to lead, such as renovating homes, making glazed pottery, or shooting at firing ranges.

If someone who lives with you works with or takes part in activities that involve 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 the family's clothes.

**3 Talk to your doctor.** Talk to your doctor about any medicines, vitamins, home remedies, or supplements you are taking. Be sure to tell your doctor about any cravings you might have, such as eating dirt or clay, which might contain lead.

**4 Avoid certain foods and cosmetics.** Use caution when eating anything brought into the United States by travelers from other countries. Some candy, candy wrappers, spices and other foods, cosmetics, traditional medicines, and ceremonial or religious powders contain lead. For more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources/foods-cosmetics-medicines.htm>.

**5 Store and serve food properly.** Some dishes and serving containers contain lead. Be sure to cook, serve, and store food properly.

- Avoid using imported lead-glazed ceramic pottery.
- Avoid using pewter or brass containers or utensils.
- Avoid using leaded crystal to serve or store beverages.

**6 Eat foods with calcium, iron, and vitamin C.** These foods may help keep lead out of your unborn baby's developing body.

- Calcium is in milk, yogurt, cheese, and green leafy vegetables such as spinach.
- Iron is in lean red meat, beans, peanut butter, and cereals.
- Vitamin C is in oranges, green and red peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, and juices.

More information about the topics in this fact sheet can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>