Lead Poisoning 101

What you need to know to protect your child

Produced by CLEARCorps Detroit
Lead Abatement · Healthy Homes · Outreach · Policy · Advocacy

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What Does a Lead Hazard Look Like?

Lead based paint was used until 1978 on windows, porches, doors, baseboards, some walls, and painted siding. When chipping and peeling, lead based paint creates poisonous dust that damages children’s brains when it is taken in through hand to mouth contact.

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Lead and Demolition

- Lead dust from demolishing a house can spread more than a football field in every direction.
  1. Stay inside during demolition.
  2. Keep windows and doors closed.
  3. Children should not be outside during any neighborhood demolition.
  4. Children should not play in bare dirt or exposed soil at any time.
  5. Cover garden plots with plastic sheeting & throw away.
  6. Wet clean your house following demolition:
     - See Wet Clean Lead Safe on page 7. For demo:
     - After you mop your house, mop your porches. Do not use water you use on your porch inside your home.
     - Clean your mop head very well with new soap and water.

Call 313-577-1164 with questions.

Call 1-844-DET-DEMO to report unsafe demolition.

Additional Resources

- Gas and Lights:
- LSP Program (reduced rates and savings): 1-844-598-7967
- SPP (Shutoff Protection): 1-800-477-4747
- Water Bill: WRAP Program, 313-386-9727
- Property Tax and Tenant’s Rights: UCHC, 313-963-3310
- DHS State Emergency Relief: 1-855-275-6424
- Early On: Extra help for kids age 0-3, 1-800-EARLYON
- Head Start: Preschool age 0-5, michheadstart.org/locator
- WIC Program: Food and Health, ages 0-5, 1-800-26-BIRTH
- Asthma: Wayne CHAP Asthma Education, 313-863-2427
- Blood Lead Testing: Detroit Health Dept., 313-876-0133
- Jobs and Training: DetroitAtWork.com, 313-962-9675
Other Sources of Lead

- Cheap costume jewelry and cosmetics
- Cheap and thrift store plastic toys
- Imported spices, candy, and sauces

Lead Safe Gardening

- **Get your soil tested** before gardening by calling Keep Growing Detroit at 313-757-2635 or by visiting detroitagriculture.net. Only soil with lead levels **under 300 ppm** should be used for growing food to eat.
- Lead from factory pollution, old car exhaust, and chipping paint contaminated the soil. Lead is most commonly found in the top four inches of soil.
- Lead accumulates more in root vegetables like carrots and on leafy greens like lettuce than in fruiting crops like tomatoes.
- Most soil in older, industrial cities like Detroit could be contaminated. Use **Best Gardening Practices:**
  - Treat soil with lead free compost
  - Till (turn over) soil as deeply as possible (at least four inches)
  - Plant your garden away from buildings, garages, and the street
  - Keep your soil pH above 6.5 to help limit the amount of lead entering plants
  - **Raised garden beds** filled with fresh, uncontaminated soil may be a safer alternative in areas of concern.
  - Growing a garden can improve your child’s diet, reducing the risk of lead getting into your child’s system.

The Effects of Lead Poisoning

**Lead damages the brain.**

**It can cause:**
- Learning difficulties
- Behavior problems
- Violent tendencies
- Hyperactivity
- ADHD-type symptoms
- Memory loss
- Hearing loss

A lead poisoned child is:
- 7 times more likely to drop out of high school.
- 6 times more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.
- 50% more likely to do poorly on the MEAP achievement test.

Sources: clearcorpsdetroit.org/resources/lead-safe-gardening. Special thanks to Keep Growing Detroit.

Photo credit: Keep Growing Detroit
10 Tips to Prevent Lead Poisoning

1. Get every child tested for lead starting at age nine months at their doctor or at a clinic. Retest them each year until age six. See page 6.

2. Wash children’s hands, toys, bottles, and pacifiers often.

3. Feed your child a diet rich in calcium and iron (fruits, vegetables, and lean meats). Give them whole milk until age two, and then 2% milk after that. Feed them a daily multivitamin. Avoid fatty and sugary foods. See page 6.


5. Do not let children play in bare dirt, near windows, or on porches with old paint. Cover bare dirt with grass.

Lead in Water

- Most lead hazards come from lead-based paint dust.
- Lead can get into your drinking water when it sits in your pipes for several hours. The longer water is in your pipes, the more lead it may contain, such as during the day while you are away or at night while you sleep.
- Lead in water comes from exposed lead service lines, old solder, and old fixtures that contained lead.
- Over time, mineral deposits form a protective layer over the insides of your pipes, reducing, but not stopping, exposed lead.

What You Can Do

- “Flush” your pipes before drinking or cooking anytime a faucet has not been used for several hours. Run the water for 30 seconds to two minutes until you feel it get as cold as it can.
- If you know you have a lead service line, “flush” your pipes for an additional 1-2 minutes.
- Cook only with cold tap water.
- Make baby formula or bottles using only cold tap water you heat up. Never use hot tap water to make baby formula.
- Get your water tested for lead by calling DWSD at 313-964-9300 and visit detroitmi.gov/dwsd
- Consider using an NSF/ANSI Standard-53 rated water filter that goes on your kitchen faucet and says “For Lead” on the box. Be sure to change the filter cartridges when you need to. Even with a filter, you should still flush your pipes. Not all filters filter lead.

Sources: EPA/810-F-93-001 and Section 1417 of the Safe Drinking Water Act
Get Your Home Tested

• Only a Lead Inspection/Risk Assessment (LIRA) by a certified Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor can legally determine lead hazards in your home.

• A LIRA will tell you which surfaces have lead based paint and which are hazards.

• A LIRA is required before a landlord rents out a property in Detroit.

• Only hire a professional to perform a LIRA, which should cost between $450-$600.

Make sure your Lead Inspector/Risk Assessor:

1. Uses an XRF instrument to determine lead hazards.
2. Gives you a written contract.
3. Is certified and in good standing with the State of Michigan by calling 866-691-5323.
4. Is familiar with the City of Detroit Property Maintenance Code (See page 11).

⇒ View tips for choosing recommended Lead Inspector/Risk Assessors at CLEARCorpsDetroit.org

Lead Poisoning Is 100% Preventable.

Take your shoes off at the door. You can track lead dust in from outside.

Only use cold tap water to cook or to make bottles. Flush your pipes each morning before you drink water from them. Water standing in pipes for several hours can contain lead from old pipe joints and fixtures. Hot tap water can also contain lead. See page 13.

When repairing or remodeling your home, do not let children near work areas. Clean thoroughly. Work lead safe. See pages 8-9.

Make sure that anyone who works in construction or auto repair changes their clothes and showers before greeting or holding children. Separate dirty work clothes from other laundry.

Apply for a grant that can help you make your home lead-safe! See page 10. Tell your friends and neighbors about lead poisoning prevention!
Get Your Child Tested

- **Get your child tested** for lead each year from age nine months to age six.
- The test will tell you your child’s **blood lead level**.
- Request a lead test from your doctor.
- Ask your local health department for testing sites. **Call the Detroit Health Dept. at 313-410-8142.**
- Your insurance, including Medicaid, should cover the lead test.
- A child is **lead poisoned** with a level of **5V µg/dL** (micrograms per deciliter) or higher.
- If you have a Capillary (C) test result, confirm the level with a follow-up Venous (V) blood test.

Feed Your Child Right

A healthy diet can prevent lead from getting into your child’s system.

**Feed your family:**
- A diet rich in calcium and iron
- Fruits and veggies
- Lean meats
- Whole milk until age two, then 2%, 1%, or skim milk after that
- Limit milk to 24 ounces per day
- A daily multivitamin

**Avoid** fried foods and sugary foods because the body can store lead in fat.

Lead and the Law

City of Detroit Property Maintenance Code

- It is **illegal** for a landlord to rent out a property in the City of Detroit with lead hazards. Landlords must register their rental properties at [detroitmi.gov/rental](http://detroitmi.gov/rental).
- Landlords must have a **Certificate of Compliance** before they rent out their property.
- To get a Certificate of Compliance, a landlord must first get a **Lead Inspection/Risk Assessment**, fix any lead hazards, and get a **Lead Clearance**, which proves that the house is “lead safe” at that time.
- Visit [tinyurl.com/leadordinance](http://tinyurl.com/leadordinance) for legal requirements.
- **Ask your landlord** if their property has a Lead Clearance. Ask them to provide you with a copy.

State of Michigan Landlord Penalty Law

- It is **illegal** to rent a unit to a family with a lead poisoned child if the landlord **has knowledge** that lead hazards exist at the property.
- **Fines** for first time offenders can be up to **$5,000** and 93 days in jail.

Federal Disclosure Law

- Landlords must **disclose all known lead hazards** to tenants at time of lease or lease renewal and provide tenants with the Protect Your Family From Lead In Your Home brochure.
Make Your Home Lead Safe
There are grant programs that can help!

- You must have a child under six living in your home or rental property or be pregnant to qualify for most grant programs.

- **Apply** for the MDHHS Lead Safe Home Program by calling 313-924-4000 or 866-691-5323.

- Apply for the Detroit Housing and Revitalization Department’s lead program by calling 313-224-6380.

**Lead Safe Housing**

- **Detroit landlords** must make their properties lead safe before they rent them out as required by the Detroit Property Maintenance Code. (see page 11)

- Assume buying an “as-is” house means it will have lead paint hazards.

- Avoid renting a home with old wood windows.

- Visit CLEARCorpsDetroit.org/relocation for lead-safe relocation resources.

- Call 313-924-4000 and ask for assistance with finding lead safe housing.

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Clean Lead Safe: Clean Wet!

How to remove leaded dust from your home.

**Materials Needed:**

- Mop
- Any soapy cleaning solution
- Two Buckets
- Spray bottle
- Paper towels

**Directions for Floors:**

- Fill one bucket with cleaning solution and water and one bucket with just rinse water.
- Start in the corner of the room farthest from the door.
- Mop out of the room heading towards the door.
- Wring out mop frequently using rinse water.
- Change all water frequently.

**Directions for Window Sills, Wells, and Surfaces:**

- Spray all wooden parts of the window with cleaning solution from a spray bottle.
- Wipe with disposable paper towels.
- Clean from top to bottom.
- Focus on window sills and wells.

⇒ Wet clean weekly where your child eats and plays.

⇒ Wet clean anything your kids touch or put in their mouths.

Wet clean weekly on a regular schedule.

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**Clean Lead Safe: Clean Wet!**

Assume this door jamb paint contains lead and makes dust.
How to Work Lead Safe*

Lead was in paint until 1978.
When working with old paint, ALWAYS:

1. Assume that paint on wood trim, windows, doors, porches, and exterior surfaces contains lead.

2. Contain dust and paint chips in work areas by taping down plastic sheeting over doorways and on the floor.

3. Wear work clothes and shoes. Change clothes before holding children or sitting on furniture. If producing a lot of dust, wear a NIOSH-Approved P-100 rated respirator, found at your local hardware store.

4. Work wet. Mist surfaces with water from a spray bottle. Wet scrape with a hand scraper. This helps reduce dust. Do not dry sand. Do not strip paint with an open flame or heat.

5. Paint all wet scraped surfaces. Normal painting does not permanently cover a lead hazard. Repaint as needed.

6. Wet clean during and after the work process. Do not use a wet/dry-type vacuum. Use only a HEPA rated vacuum.

7. Carefully dispose of all plastic and debris in a heavy duty garbage bag sealed with duct tape.

8. Change your clothes and wash them separately. Shower immediately following work.

When working with old paint, NEVER:

- Touch or hold your children during work or let them near where you are working.
- Use an open flame or heat on old paint. Never dry sand painted surfaces.

Get Certified:

Become Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Certified: www2.epa.gov/lead

*Disclaimer: this brochure does not certify you to perform work for pay or to work on rental properties.