



How can I protect myself and my family?

- Wash your hands and face before eating or drinking at work
- Don't smoke in the work area
- Wear proper protective equipment such as a fitted respirator and gloves when working around lead dust or fumes
- When done working for the day, shower at work if you can or immediately once you get home.
- Change into clean clothes and shoes at work before you go home
- If possible, wash your clothes at work. If not, wash work clothes separate from other clothes and run the empty washing machine again to rinse out lead
- Participate in your employer's lead screening program if you are at risk for lead poisoning
- Keep your work area and home clean by using a wet cloth to clean horizontal surfaces, a wet mop to clean floors, and a vacuum with a HEPA filter
- Use safe procedures or hire a professional when renovating a home built before 1978

For more information

If you would like more information regarding lead poisoning prevention, please contact us at:

Office of Environmental Health Hazards & Indoor Air

Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
301 Centennial Mall South
PO Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

(402) 471-0386 or

1-888-242-1100

www.dhhs.ne.gov/lead

Department of Health & Human Services

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PREVENTING

Lead Poisoning in Adults



Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Public Health

What is lead poisoning?

Lead is a toxic metal used in many industries and found in many consumer products. Lead poisoning can occur when lead builds up in the body. No amount of lead in the body is considered safe.

Am I at risk for lead exposures?

Many jobs and work activities involve lead. You may be at risk if you:

- Melt, cast, or grind lead, brass, or bronze
- Make ammunition, fire guns, or work at a shooting range
- Work with scrap metal or electronics
- Scrape, sand, remove or handle lead-based paint or products painted with it
- Tear down or renovate old buildings or bridges
- Make or repair batteries, radiators, or automobiles
- Make or work with ceramics, jewelry, or stained glass

Some lead exposures are due to hobbies, including:

- Shooting in indoor ranges
- Making bullets or fishing sinkers
- Making pottery, stained glass, or jewelry
- Home renovations and furniture refinishing

There are other less common sources of lead exposure in adults, such as imported candy and using alternative or folk medicines.



! This worker is not wearing proper protective equipment and is at risk for lead exposure.

How can lead poisoning affect my health?

Lead exposures usually occur by swallowing lead dust or breathing in dust and fumes containing lead. Once it is in the body, it can be stored in your organs and bones where it can cause serious and permanent damage to your kidneys, brain and nervous system, cardiovascular system, reproductive system, and other parts of the body. Too much lead can even cause coma or death.

Lead exposures can cause:

- High blood pressure
- Decreased sex drive, infertility
- Digestive problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Tiredness or weakness
- Hearing and vision problems
- Your risk of health damage increases with the amount of lead in your body and the length of time you have been exposed.

How do I know if I am exposed to lead?

A simple blood test can measure how much lead is in your blood, known as a blood lead level (BLL). If you think you are exposed to lead at work or at home, ask your doctor for a blood lead test. Scientists and doctors recommend that blood lead levels in adults be kept below 10 µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter), and levels should be kept below 5 µg/dL for women who are pregnant or may become pregnant.

What is take-home lead?

People who have jobs or hobbies that involve lead can bring lead dust into their home on work clothes, skin, or equipment. This is called 'take-home lead' and it can expose anyone who comes in contact with it. Take-home lead can even cause lead poisoning in children who live in or visit the house.

For more information on take-home lead, call 1-888-242-1100 or visit <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/lead>

