

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE  
*of the*  
ATTORNEY GENERAL  
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Environmental Protection Bureau

***Should My Child Be Tested  
for Lead Poisoning?***

**What Are The Dangers Of Lead  
Poisoning To Children?**

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Lead is highly toxic, especially to children under 7 years old.

No safe blood lead level in children has been identified. Even in small amounts, lead can cause serious, permanent health problems, including harming your child's ability to learn and read, attention deficits, hyperactivity, irritability, and other behavioral problems.

At high levels, lead can cause brain damage and even death.

**What Causes Lead Poisoning  
In Children?**

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Children may be exposed to dangerous amounts of lead in a number of different ways, including contact with lead paint or dust, children's jewelry and toys, traditional medicines or folk remedies, and certain food or liquid containers.

**How Can I Know If My Child Has  
Been Lead Poisoned?**

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A child with lead poisoning will not usually look or feel sick. The only way to know for sure is to have your child tested.

Generally, if you have any concerns about your child and lead, you should consult with your doctor or local health department about getting your child tested.

## Should My Child Be Tested For Lead Poisoning?

New York State law requires that children be tested for lead by a health care provider at ages 1 and 2.

Additionally, if your child is under age 7 – and the answer is “yes” to any of the following questions – your child is at risk for lead poisoning and should be tested:

\_\_\_ Does your child live in or regularly visit an older home/building (particularly one built before 1978) with peeling or chipping paint, or with recent or ongoing renovation?

\_\_\_ Has your family/child ever lived outside the United States or recently arrived from a country, such as those in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where lead may be more common?

\_\_\_ Does your child have a brother/sister, housemate/playmate being followed or treated by health professionals for lead poisoning?

\_\_\_ Does your child frequently chew on or put things in their mouth such as toys or jewelry?

\_\_\_ Does your child come into contact with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead? (Adults whose jobs involve home renovation, painting, plumbing, autobody work, or electronics, or whose hobbies involve pottery, stained glass, furniture refinishing, can bring lead into the home).

\_\_\_ Does your family use traditional medicines, folk remedies, or imported cosmetics? (Imported products, especially those from the Middle East, Southeast Asia, India, the Dominican Republic, or Mexico, can contain lead).

\_\_\_ Does your family frequently eat imported candies, spices, or canned products? (For example, candy containing tamarind, chili powder, or salt, and imported from Mexico, Malaysia, China and India, can be contaminated with lead).

\_\_\_ Does your family cook, store, or serve food in old or imported containers that may contain lead? (Lead-glazed ceramics, pottery, china, and leaded crystal, often originating from other countries, can leach lead into your child’s food or liquid).

\_\_\_ Does your family live near an active lead smelter, battery recycling plant, or other industry likely to release lead, or live near a contaminated site or major highway where soil or dust might contain lead?

## HOW CAN I ARRANGE FOR MY CHILD TO BE TESTED FOR LEAD?

Talk to your doctor about having your child tested for lead.

If you do not have a doctor, talk to your local health department. Contact information for local health departments is available through the New York State Department of Health’s website ([www.health.ny.gov](http://www.health.ny.gov)) or by calling 800-458-1158.