

HOW TO CLEAN A HOME THAT HAS LEAD-CONTAMINATED DUST

Lead dust and chips from lead-based paint are the most common source of lead poisoning. As lead-based paint ages, it can deteriorate (chip, crack, peel) because of weathering. It can also be broken down by friction from surfaces rubbing together such as in windows, doors and stairways, or from bumping furniture, toys, and vacuum cleaners into painted surfaces. Lead dust is so fine that it cannot be seen. Any home built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint. The older your home is, the more likely it is that it contains lead-based paint. The amount of lead added to paint was greatly reduced in the 50's and 60's, but lead was still used in some paint until 1978.

- **Pregnant women must not clean up lead dust. Lead dust can harm the developing baby.**
- Remove children and pets from the rooms being cleaned.
- Read the cleaning products directions and warning label.

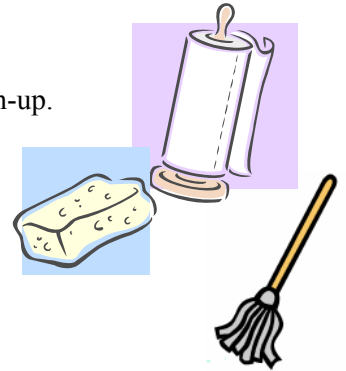
TO CLEAN HARD SURFACES

1. **Put on plastic, rubber, or latex gloves.** Pick up large paint chips and place them into a plastic trash bag. Use a tack cloth, masking tape or duct tape to pick up small lead paint chips.



Do not attempt to make repairs to chipped and peeling lead-based paint yourself without the proper equipment and instructions. Never dry-sand or scrape lead-based paint. This will create more lead dust. See the EPA booklets [Protect your Family from Lead in your Home](#), [Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling your Home](#), and [Lead Paint Safety](#). The Department of Health also has a pamphlet on special lead-based paint [encapsulants](#). Pregnant women, young children and pets should not be in the home while the repairs are being done. They must stay away until the clean-up after the repair work is finished

2. Wet mop and clean at least once a week. Use disposable paper towels as much as possible. If you must use fabric dust cloths, sponges or mops, be sure they are only used for lead dust clean-up. Do not use them for any other purpose.



Cleaning solution



empty bucket



rinse water

3. Prepare three (3) buckets. Add **cleaning solution and water to the first bucket** and use this to wipe down surfaces and mop floors. (You do not need special detergents to remove lead dust. Ordinary cleaning products will work.)

The **second bucket will be empty** so you can squeeze dirty water from the rag, sponge or mop into it after you clean surfaces. (If using paper towels, throw the used paper towels into a trash can that is out of the reach of children.)

Fill the **third bucket with warm rinse water** and wipe down surfaces and floors again to remove any soapy water film. Wring this rag, sponge or mop out into the middle bucket, or if using paper towels, throw them away.

Clean one room at a time. Work from the top down. Clean the highest surfaces first and work your way to the floor. Always start at the farthest corner of the room and work your way to the door. Clean the floor last.

4. The dirty water in the buckets can be flushed down the toilet. Make new buckets of cleaning solution and clean warm rinse water. Get a clean rag, sponge or new paper towels. Move to another room and repeat steps 1 to 4. Continue until all rooms have been cleaned.

5. When finished, wash the rags, sponges and mop heads, in a separate load in the washing machine. **Do not add any other clothes or linens to this load.**

TO CLEAN CARPETS AND RUGS

1. To clean wall-to-wall carpets:

An older vacuum cleaner with a cloth bag is NOT suitable for cleaning a lead dust-contaminated house. Dust can pass through the cloth bag and resettle in the house.



Use a **HEPA (high efficiency particle air) filter vacuum cleaner, if possible**. These special vacuum cleaners can be purchased through most vacuum cleaner distributors or you can find information and order them on the Internet. They can be expensive, so check the ratings on the HEPA vacuum cleaner before you purchase it.

If a HEPA vacuum is not available, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that conventional vacuum cleaners be used with “HEPA-type” or “allergy” filter bags, to remove more fine dust particles from carpets and indoor air. Although these bags have not been scientifically tested for lead dust removal, they are designed to pick up smaller particles than standard vacuum cleaner bags and, should collect more fine lead dust particles than standard vacuum cleaner bags.

Vacuum the rug from top to bottom and then left to right. Spend 10 minutes vacuuming a small area (2 ft x5 ft).

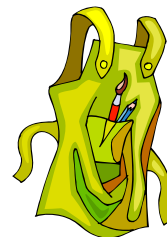
Rugs can then be steam cleaned. The EPA notes that **adding sodium hexametaphosphate** (which is found in products such as Calgon®)* to the cleaning solution **increases the amount of lead removed from the carpets by steam cleaning.**

2. To clean scatter rugs:

Wash scatter rugs in a washing machine. **Do not put in any other clothes or linens.** Use an all-purpose laundry detergent.

WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR CHILD’S ACCESS TO LEAD DUST IN YOUR HOME.

1. If anyone in the household has a [job or hobby](#) that may involve lead, ask that person to change his/her clothes and take a shower before coming home. If the person does the job or hobby in the home, be sure that it is in a separate area and that the area is cleaned up after use. The person should wear a smock or cover-up that can be laundered separately.



2. Move your child’s bedroom or play area to a room where there is no peeling or flaking lead-based paint. If windows have flaking and peeling paint, try to keep those windows closed until they are fixed. Use other windows instead.

3. Move furniture to block your child’s access to lead-based paint that is chipping and peeling. Also block your child from lead-based painted areas that he or she may bite, chew or suck on. Cover windowsills with contact paper, duct tape, or plastic (be sure it is taped down securely), so that your child can’t get to the dust and paints chips on them.

4. Put felt or rubber pads on the back of furniture so it doesn’t bump the walls and baseboards.

5. Place doormats on the inside and outside of the main entrance to your home, so that you don’t track in lead-contaminated soil. Have people take off their shoes before entering your home.



6. Be especially careful about the bare soil that is close to the house and below areas of old lead paint, Do not plant vegetables or allow your child or pets to play in these areas. Do not let your child play in bare or exposed dirt. Keep your child from eating dirt. If possible, provide a sand box with clean lead-free sand. Keep your pet on a leash and out of bare soil, so that you pet does not track lead dust into your home

* The New Mexico Department of Health does not endorse any products. This product is only mentioned as an example, for your convenience

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