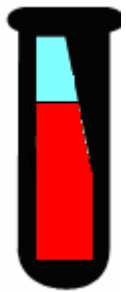


# Lead and Pregnancy - Protect Your Unborn Baby

If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant you need to avoid exposure to lead while carrying your baby. If you were exposed to lead in the past, this can also be a problem as lead can be stored in your bones for 20 to 30 years and then be released to your developing baby during pregnancy. Be sure to talk to your medical provider about this.



- Lead can affect the development of your unborn baby's brain and nervous system. Your child can then have learning and behavior problems.
- Lead can cause high blood pressure and complications during pregnancy.
- Lead can cause your baby to be born prematurely or have a low birth weight. Such babies are at higher risks for illness.
- Although rare, lead can also cause your pregnancy to end in a miscarriage or a still birth



1. Get a blood test for lead before becoming pregnant, or at the beginning of your pregnancy in order to get a baseline reading of any lead that may be in your blood stream. Take the [Lead Risk Questionnaire for Pregnant Woman](#) and talk with you medical provider about your answers.

2. Follow your medical provider's advice on when to get tested again. A pregnant woman's blood lead level increases during pregnancy, if she has lead stored in her body from a past exposure. As the baby grows and develops it needs calcium, and may take lead (if it is there) along with calcium from your body.

3. Follow your medical provider's advice on the amount of calcium to take daily. Taking very high doses of calcium is unwise and can cause other health problems. Most prenatal vitamins contain calcium. If your medical provider recommends that you take more calcium supplements, look for ones that have calcium citrate or calcium carbonate. Do not use calcium supplements made from coral, sea urchin, oyster shell, bone meal or dolomite as these may have lead in them.

**You can get lead in your body from various sources. These are some of the common ones.**

## Lead-based Paint

Lead dust and chips from lead-based paint are the most common source of lead poisoning. As lead-based paint ages, it can break down (chip, crack, peel) because of weathering. It can also be worn down by friction from surfaces rubbing together such as in windows, doors and stairways, or from bumping furniture, toys, and vacuum cleaners into lead- painted walls and baseboards. Lead dust is so fine that it cannot be seen. Any home built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint,



- Be especially careful when cleaning a house with lead-contaminated dust. If you are pregnant try to get someone else to do the cleaning. See [How to Clean a Home That Has Lead-Contaminated Dust](#).



- If doing remodeling or repairs in an older home with lead-based paint, hire a contractor trained in lead-safe work practices. If repairs will be made by someone in your household, friend or relative, be sure lead-safe work practices are used. (Never dry sand or scrape lead-based paint.) See [Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling your Home](#) You and your children should not be around when these repairs are made.



- Old furniture can be painted with lead-based paint or varnishes. Be especially careful about antique pieces that have peeling or worn paint and are used in popular “country style” decorating.



## **Eating Non-food Items**

Sometimes woman crave certain things during pregnancy that are not food. Also some women are told that they can get minerals by eating dirt, clay and pottery. These practices can be harmful as these items can have lead in them.

## **Lead plumbing and Pipes with Lead Solder**

Older homes may have lead in the plumbing. Run water for 15 to 30 seconds before drinking it, especially if you have not used your water for a few hours. Use only cold water for food preparation (drinking, cooking, making juice, tea coffee, and preparing formula, cereal, or juice for babies.) Hot water will leach more lead out of the plumbing. See [Lead in Drinking Water](#)

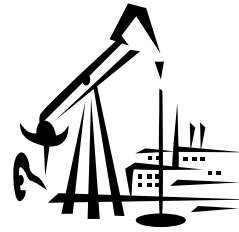
## **Jobs and Hobbies That Use Leaded Products**

If you or someone in your household has a job or hobby that uses lead products, be careful not to expose yourself to lead dust. Lead dust can be carried home on the body. If you or someone in your household work at any of the following jobs or hobbies, please get a copy of [Jobs and Hobbies Which Can Expose You to Lead](#) and [Protect Yourself and Your Family from Lead Used in Your Small Business or Hobby](#)

- radiator repair ▪ auto body or auto repair ▪ recycling or fixing batteries repairing/installing tires
- industrial machinery manufacture and repair
- remodeling, repairing, or demolition of pre-1978 buildings
- housekeeping or maintenance of a lead-dust contaminated building

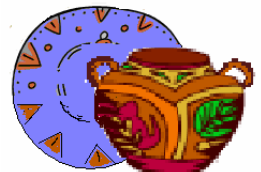


- repairing or repainting bridges, tanks, or girders
- mining, ▪ gas and oil field work
- computer repair, manufacture of computer, cell phone or other electronic components
- welding ▪ working in a smelter
- working with brass or bronze, ▪ using lead solder
- foundry work ▪ working with scrap metal
- valve and pipe fitting ▪ plumbing,
- working at or using a shooting range ▪ hunting or shooting a gun,
- military operations
- casting bullets or making fishing weights
- selling, refinishing, collecting or decorating with old lead-base painted furniture/toys/antiques
- making or repairing jewelry with leaded materials (especially silver solder with lead)
- making stained glass ▪ making, cutting or setting tile
- painting ceramics or pottery with lead-containing glazes



### **Products That May Contain Lead**

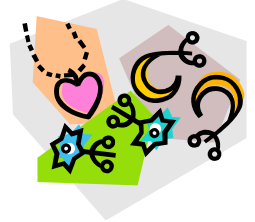
- Some plastic/vinyl products contain lead: vinyl mini-blinds imported before 1996 (these break down over time and make lead dust and should be carefully removed and thrown away); many cords on telephones, appliances, and computers, some imported Christmas lights (Lead can get on your hands and then onto food, or drinks. Wash hands often.); some garden hoses also contain lead, so don't take a drink from one.
- Some imported dishes have lead in the glaze. Do not use such items for cooking or storing foods. Do not use them for serving hot foods or acidic foods (tomato sauce or soup, citrus fruits, orange or lemon drinks, sodas, or foods with vinegar). This can leach the lead out of the pottery/ceramic and into the food. See



<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/article.cfm?ContentID=957> for more information about lead in dishes.



- Cigarettes and cigarette smoke contain lead and other heavy metals.
- Some imported inexpensive metal jewelry, may contain lead. Lead does not get into your body through your skin, but some people put these things in their mouth, or handle these items and then put unwashed hands into their mouth. Go to <http://www.health.state.nm.us/eheb/LeadLinks.htm> and look under **Links to Recalls and Notices** for more information and photos of these items.



- Certain home or folk remedies, such as orange, red, yellow, brown, black powders, or certain clays for stomach ache, nausea, diarrhea, rash or fever, may contain lead. These remedies include: [Greta](#), [Azarcón](#), [Alarcon](#), [Rueda](#), [Coral](#), [Liga](#), [Maria Luisa](#), “Navajo clay”, [Litargirio](#), [Ghasard](#), [Bala Goli](#), [Kandu](#), [Kohl](#), [Alcohol](#), [Surma](#) or [Pay-loo-ah](#).

- Some Middle Eastern, Asian and Ayurvedic [medicines/tonics](#) have been reported to contain lead.
- Some Mexican candies and seasonings have been reported to contain lead at various times.

These products include: Lucas Limon, Lucas Acidito, Super Lucas, Lucas Limon con Chile, Borlindo, Chaca-Chaca, Brinquentos, Vero Rebanaditas, Vero Mango, Vero Elotes, Picarindo, Tama Roca, Licona Tamarindo, Jarrita Chonita Tejocote, Margarita brand Tamarinda Pulpo, Pelon Pelo Rico, Tablarindo, Serpentinatas, Rollito de Tamarindo, and Pica Limon. Chapulines have also been reported to have lead in them.



- Some inks on package wrappers or plastic bags, and some colored plastic shopping bags have lead in them.
- Certain hair dyes contain lead.

## **After Your Baby Is Born**

- Talk to your medical provider about breast-feeding your baby. Even if you had lead in your body, very little lead is passed into your milk and it is usually safe to breast-feed your baby.
- After your baby is born be sure to make lead-safe home for your child, by continuing all of these practices.
- Have your child tested for lead at 12 months and again at 24 months of age.

Environmental Health Epidemiology Bureau  
Lead Poisoning Prevention Program  
505-476-3586

