

# Foods That May Help Reduce the Harmful Effects of Lead

**Keep lead out of your life. It is a poison and interferes with many of the normal functions in the human body.** Lead can affect the chemicals which carry nerve signals, and cause changes to memory, intelligence and behavior. Lead interferes with the formation of hemoglobin (the oxygen-carrying substance in red blood cells) and cause anemia. Lead is taken up by the bones and can be stored in the body for a long time. Elevated blood lead levels can lead to hearing loss. High lead levels can also affect the kidneys and reproductive systems of adults and cause high blood pressure.

**A pregnant woman who is exposed to lead or had a high blood lead level in the past, can pass the lead to her developing baby.** If you are pregnant, may become pregnant, or are a parent with young children, and work with lead or lead products, you need to know how to protect yourself and your children from lead from your job. If you do not have this information already, contact the New Mexico Department of Health, Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at **1-505-476-3586 or 1-800-879-3421.**

Young children more easily absorb lead than adults. It is also more quickly absorbed if a child has a poor diet or is always hungry. When a person's stomach is empty, the body takes up lead much faster. **Foods high in iron, calcium and vitamin C may help to reduce the harmful effects of lead.**

**Only take calcium or iron supplements on your physician's advice. Taking large amounts of iron and calcium could be harmful. Iron overdose in children can be**

**fatal.** It is essential to eliminate sources of lead in your environment. Follow your physician's advice and keep all appointments.

Choosing a low fat diet may help lower the amount of lead in the body, and may also help lower the risk of heart disease and some forms of cancer. Avoid high fat snacks such as donuts, potato chips, corn chips, pies, cupcakes, pastries and chocolate. Substitute healthy snacks like raisins, nuts, cheese, fruits, vegetables, and low fat tortillas or crackers. **Be careful, as some of these foods could be a choking hazard for young children.**

Avoid eating at fast food restaurants. The foods served there tend to be very high in fat – especially hamburgers and fried foods. Choose food like salads or broiled chicken instead, and use low fat dressings.

When cooking, use olive or vegetable oil. Avoid using butter, margarine, Crisco®, or lard whenever possible. Avoid high fat food such as fried potatoes, chorizo, fry bread, quesadillas, and sopapillas. Remove fat and skin from chicken and fish<sup>†</sup> and trim fat from other meats. Grill and broil meats and fish so that the fat drips away from the food

Do not eliminate all fats from your or your family's diet, as some fat is necessary for energy, healthy skin, nerves, and brain function. **Children under the age of 2 need fat in their diets for growth and normal brain**

**development.** Make sure you give children under age 2 whole milk to drink after they are weaned from formula or breast milk. Use **soy** formula or milk for children under 2, **only if recommended by your physician.** Be sure it is

vitamin and calcium fortified. **Do not use rice milk instead of formula or milk for children under 2 as it does not contain enough nutrients and will cause malnutrition.** For children over 2, choose low fat dairy products, or low fat, calcium-fortified dairy product substitutes if you child is lactose intolerant.

Be sure you and your family eat a balanced diet, choosing foods from each of the food groups listed below. Younger children need smaller portions than adolescents or adults. Only very active people on high calorie diets need the largest number of servings in each group.

Five Basic Food Groups:

- Breads, cereals and grains (6 to 9 servings)
- Vegetables (3 to 5 servings)
- Fruit (2 to 4 servings)
- Milk and milk products (2 to 3 servings)
- Chicken, fish (the consumption of certain types of fish should be limited)<sup>††</sup>, lean red meats, nuts, beans, lentils (5 – 7 ounces.)

<sup>†</sup>Many toxic chemicals from the environment accumulate in the fatty tissue of fish.

<sup>††</sup>Young children, pregnant or nursing women, & women who may become pregnant should not eat king mackerel, swordfish, shark, tilefish, & limit intake of albacore tuna as they may contain mercury. For information about fish caught in local waters call 505-476-3028. **(over)**

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## VITAMIN C\*

Vitamin C is needed by the body to build health blood vessels, teeth, bones and cartilage. Serve foods with vitamin C and iron at the same, as vitamin C helps the body absorb the iron. Foods high in vitamin C are:

### Vegetables

*Over cooking vegetables can reduce the amount of vitamin C. Eat vegetables raw whenever possible.*

Broccoli, Cabbage, Brussels Sprouts

Corn, Green Peas

Tomatoes, Tomato Juice, Tomatillos,

Cauliflower

Raw Chile, Salsa Cruda

Sweet Green and Red Peppers

Onions

Summer Squash, Pumpkin, Yams, Sweet and White Potatoes

Dark green leafy vegetables: Kale, Collard Greens, Turnip Greens and Mustard Greens

### Fruits and Fruit Juices

Oranges and Orange Juice

Grapefruits and Grapefruit Juice

**Melons, Berries, Kiwi, Guava, Mango**

Papaya, Persimmon, Cantaloupes

Lychee, Baobab, Jujube

## IRON

**Always have your children wash their hands before eating, taking a nap or going to bed. Be careful as some of these foods could also be a choking hazard for young children**

**\* In addition to causing heart and lung problems, cigarette smoke destroys some vitamin C in the bodies of smokers and those who breath in second hand smoke.**

**\*\* Use soy formula or soy milk for children under 2, ONLY IF RECOMMENDED BY YOUR PHYSICIAN.**

Your body uses iron to make red blood cells. Iron is needed to process blood sugar and to maintain a healthy immune system. Iron is found in the following:

Meat and Seafood

Chicken, Pork, Beef, Lamb, Mutton

Wild Game (Elk, Deer, Buffalo, Antelope, Turkey, Rabbit)

Liver, Hearts and Kidneys

Clams and Shrimp

Oysters, Scallops and Sardines

**Beans (Canned, Fresh or Dried)**

Pinto, Black, Navy, Kidney, Lima

Garbanzo and Soy, Lentils

### Vegetables

**Dark Leafy Greens such as Spinach, Kale, Mustard, Collard, and Dandelion**

### Greens

### Other

Eggs, Molasses, Peanut Butter,

Almonds, Pecans, Pine Nuts

Whole Grain or Enriched White

Flour and Breads – Check Label

### Fruits

Raisins, Dried Peaches and Dried Apricots

Prunes, Prune Juice and Cooked Prunes

Iron Fortified Cereals- Check Label

Product 19, Total, Kix, Chex, Cheerios, and

Cream of Wheat

## CALCIUM

Calcium builds and maintains health bones and teeth. It is needed for proper blood clotting and for healthy muscles and nerves. Foods rich in calcium are:

### Milk or Milk Substitutes

Give whole milk or soy milk\*\*with fat to children under two years of age. Do NOT use rice milk instead of milk or formula for children under 2. Choose low fat products for children older than two.

Milk, Buttermilk

Evaporated and Dried Milk

Yogurt, Frozen Yogurt, Yogurt Drinks

Ice Milk, Ice Cream

Cheese, Cottage Cheese and Cheese Spreads

Or Products Made with Milk Substitutes

### Foods Made with Milk or Milk Substitutes

Cream Soups and Sauces

Flan, Custard, Pudding, Pancakes

### Seafood

Oysters, Sardines and

Canned Salmon (leave in the bones)

### Other

Corn Tortillas, Bulgur, Eggs

Broccoli, Collard Greens

Almond, Pecans, Pine Nuts

Calcium Fortified Orange Juice

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Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

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**505-476-3566 or 1-800-879-3421**