



PREGNANCY AND LEAD POISONING

What You Should Know

**Lead is a poison
that can harm you
and your baby when
you are pregnant**



Lead can cause:

- High blood pressure
- Miscarriage
- Your baby to be born too early or too small
- Learning and behavior issues in your child

You can be exposed to lead in different ways, including eating foods contaminated with lead or using products that contain lead. If you were exposed to lead when you were younger, you may still have lead in your body. When you are pregnant, the lead in your body can be passed to your baby.

Your health care provider should assess your risk for lead exposure



At your first prenatal visit, your provider should ask about your recent and past exposure to lead.

Tell your doctor about:

- Time you have spent outside the United States
- Products such as health remedies, spices, foods, cosmetics or ceramics from other countries that you have used in the last year
- Cravings you have for nonfood items, such as clay, crushed pottery, soil or paint chips
- Renovation or repair work in your home in the last year
- Jobs or hobbies that may involve contact with lead

You may not look or feel sick if you have been exposed to lead. The only way to know is to get a blood lead test. To be tested, ask your provider.

Protect yourself and your baby



- Avoid using health remedies, foods, spices and cosmetics that may contain lead.
- Avoid using traditional or handmade ceramics to cook, serve or store food.
- Never eat nonfood items such as clay, crushed pottery, soil or paint chips.
- Stay away from repair or renovation work being done in your home.
- Avoid jobs and hobbies that may involve contact with lead, such as construction, home renovation, auto repair, furniture refinishing, or working with jewelry, metals or color pigments.
- Wash work clothes separately from the rest of the laundry if someone in your household works with lead.

Eat a healthy diet



Talk to your provider to make sure you are getting enough calcium, iron and vitamin C.

- **Foods with calcium:** Milk, cheese, yogurt, spinach, collard greens, tofu, salmon and ice cream
- **Foods with iron:** Lean red meat, chicken, eggs, tuna, lentils, beans, peas, prunes, raisins, broccoli and spinach
- **Foods with vitamin C:** Oranges, grapefruit, strawberries, kiwi, fruit juices, peppers, broccoli and tomatoes



Protect your baby

- Use cold tap water for making baby formula or baby cereal, and for drinking or cooking. Call **311** to get a free lead testing kit for drinking water. You will receive the results within 30 days of submitting the water sample.
- Keep children away from peeling, cracked or loose paint – it may contain lead. Report peeling paint to your building owner. If the problem isn't fixed or if you think repair or renovation work is being done unsafely, call **311** to request a free inspection.
- Wash floors, windowsills, hands and toys often.
- Remove shoes before entering your home.
- Have household members change into clean clothing before coming home if they work with lead.
- Remind your provider to test your child for lead poisoning at ages 1 and 2 years. Ask your provider about testing older children. If you do not have a provider, call **311** to find out where to get your child tested.

For more information about lead, call **311** or visit nyc.gov/lead.

