

There is no safe blood lead level for children

Lead poisoning is a completely preventable, but irreversible condition that impacts children for a lifetime. Even children with the lowest detectable blood lead levels may develop permanent brain damage and lifelong behavioral problems. The effects of lead poisoning include struggling in school, having trouble paying attention, memory problems, lack of self-control, underperforming at work as an adult, lower lifetime earnings, and trouble with the law. Children can be exposed to lead through paint and dust from inside the home, and children under six years old are most at risk.

What to look for in your home

Lead hazards are commonly found in housing built before 1978. If you think your home might have a lead hazard, contact your landlord right away. Landlords are legally required to safely address lead paint hazards. If you need additional assistance, call 311.

In-home lead hazards include:

- Peeling or chipping paint
- Dust from opening and closing doors
- Dust from opening and closing windows
- Your tap water
- Dust and debris from renovations
- Household items including spices, jewelry, cosmetics, and ceramics

What to look for in your child

Children who have been lead poisoned may not have any visible symptoms.

Your child may not look or feel sick even if he or she has been lead poisoned. The only way to know for sure is to get a blood test. New York State law requires doctors to provide blood lead testing during regular check-ups at ages one and two and to pregnant women during their first prenatal care visit. Make sure your doctor performs these tests.

Other steps you can take

You can help protect your child from lead poisoning.

- Keep children away from peeling paint and renovation work
- Wash floors and windowsills often
- Run your tap water for at least 30 seconds before using
- Use only cold tap water for baby formula, cooking, or drinking
- Wash children's hands and toys frequently
- Be aware that some household items may contain lead (spices, traditional medicines, cosmetics, and ceramics)
- Remove shoes before entering your home