



LEAD

LEAD IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Lead is naturally occurring; it can be found in all parts of our environment. Lead-contaminated dust and particles can be found in the air, the soil, the water, or the ground surfaces where people walk and play. When lead is ingested, it is toxic and harmful to humans, even in small amounts.

Outdoors, children can be exposed to lead while playing near bare soil in yards or on contaminated playground surfaces. Some of the lead in soil comes from historic uses of leaded gasoline. Soil and playground surfaces can also become contaminated from deteriorating lead-based paint on the outside of nearby buildings, or from building renovations or demolitions.

WE CAN HELP

Lead is a continuous challenge in the District, both in our public spaces and in homes. The Department of Energy and Environment's Lead-Safe and Healthy Housing Division works to promote lead-safe and healthy housing and has responsibility for enforcement of the District's lead laws.

For more information, please call (202) 535-2600 or visit doee.dc.gov/lead.

REDUCE OR ELIMINATE YOUR EXPOSURE TO LEAD IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Lead exposure is a difficult legacy of most urban environments, one that will continue to be a challenge as we work to remedy newly identified sources. By understanding, identifying, and safely removing sources of lead in the environment, we can help ensure the long-term health of our city's youngest residents. Below is a list of simple precautions all families should take to reduce the risk of exposure to lead in an outdoor environment.

- Prevent hand-to-mouth contact such as eating and drinking while on open soil and play surface materials. Do not put any playground materials in your mouth.
- Ensure children wash hands and face with soap and water, and wipe shoes after leaving playgrounds or other areas where bare soil is present.
- Carefully remove and wash visibly dirty clothing; do not shake dust off of clothes in enclosed rooms.

REDUCE OR ELIMINATE YOUR EXPOSURE TO ENVIRONMENTAL LEAD AT YOUR HOME

Below is a list of simple precautions that can help you reduce the risk of exposure to lead around the exterior of your home.

- Check the exterior of your home, including porches and fences, for any obvious signs of deteriorated lead-based paint, such as chipping, peeling, or flaking. If your home was built before 1978, the paint may contain lead.
- Prevent children from playing in bare soil in yards or other natural or artificial surfaces, including playgrounds. Make sure you and your children wash hands after outdoor activities and before eating and sleeping.
- Cover bare ground to prevent blowing dust. Plant grass or ground cover, or apply mulch or compost to bare areas.
- Do not grow fruits or vegetables in lead-contaminated soil. A container garden using an uncontaminated growing medium is a good alternative. Wash fruits and vegetables with cold running water just before eating, cutting, or cooking.
- Avoid tracking contaminated soil into your home. Make sure everyone leaves their shoes at the door when entering your home. Place doormats outside and inside all entryways to trap dirt and dust.
- Get your home tested for lead to make sure it's safe for you and your family.