

# FACTS: Childhood Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is a major public health problem affecting nearly half a million children under the age of six. Lead poisoning is caused when lead, a metal, gets into the body and builds up to dangerous levels.



*Lead poisoned children often do not look sick, so the best way to know is to have a blood lead test.*

## What can you do? Get your child tested.

### Lead Poisoning Effects

- Learning and behavior problems
- Brain damage
- Hearing loss
- Anemia
- Seizures, coma and death

### Lead Sources

- **Lead paint** (found in homes built before 1978)
- **Plastic/vinyl mini-blinds**
- **Water** that comes through lead-soldered pipes
- **Soil** contaminated with lead
- **Toys** recalled for lead
- **Workplaces** that use lead

## How can I prevent lead poisoning?

- ✓ Make sure your children wash their hands often.
- ✓ Feed your children a healthy diet. Nutritious foods high in iron, calcium, Vitamin C and zinc can prevent problems.
- ✓ Don't use ceramic dishes or pottery for food unless you know they are lead free.
- ✓ Less developed countries still commonly use lead products. It is especially important for children born in such countries to be tested.
- ✓ Keep your house clean. Wash window sills and floors regularly with soapy water to clean lead dust, and wash anything your children put in their mouth if it falls to the floor.

**For more information contact:  
NC Lead Hotline: 1-888-774-0071 or Your Local Health Department**