

Lead Poisoning and Your Child's Eating Habits

Lead is a metal that can harm your child. Even a little lead can cause affect your child's growth and learning. Large amounts of lead can damage the brain, nervous system and kidneys. Some of these health effects may be permanent.

Lead also makes it hard for your child's body to use good minerals and vitamins like iron, calcium and Vitamin C.



A healthy diet is one way to prevent lead poisoning.

1. Get Your Child Tested for Lead.

The only way to know if your child has a lead problem is to get a blood lead test from a doctor or nurse.

2. Feed Your Child Good Foods.

Feed your child at least 3 meals and 2 snacks each day. Include foods high in:

- **Iron**– chicken, turkey, greens, iron-fortified cereals and breads
- **Calcium**– low-fat milk, cheese, yogurt, and greens
- **Vitamin C**– oranges, red and green peppers, strawberries and potatoes
- **Zinc**– brown rice, oatmeal, lentils, fish and eggs



A full stomach helps the body take in less lead.

3. Keep Your Child Safe from Lead.

- Wash hands before eating.
- Make sure your child doesn't eat peeling paint, dust, dirt or things that aren't food.
- Let water run for 15-30 seconds before you use it. Never use hot water from the faucet to prepare food.
- Don't store food in open cans.
- Use a plastic or glass pitcher to store juice, not pottery or ceramic pitchers.
- Rinse all fresh fruit and vegetables in cool running water before eating or cooking.



Wash hands regularly to prevent lead dust from entering your child's body.