



Lead can be found in unexpected places

Know where there might be lead and how to protect yourself from exposure.



Lead exposure is a known health risk. Fortunately, lead exposure has declined significantly over the last 30 years due to the removal of lead from paint, gasoline, and other products. However, sources of lead exposure still remain. Studies have identified that even lower levels of lead exposure can cause health effects, particularly for unborn or young children, who are more sensitive to lead exposure and whose behaviour and intellectual development can be effected. That's why it's important to know how lead exposure happens, and what you can do to reduce exposure for yourself, your family, and children in your care.

Lead in homes and communities

Lead is used less now than in the past however, it can still be found in some homes and communities.

Lead is more common in older homes, where it could be in house paint, plumbing, or soil around the house. Due to the past use of lead in gasoline, areas near high traffic roadways can have increased lead in soil, which can contribute to lead in yard soils or house dust. Some industries, such as lead smelters, can release airborne lead dust. Some small aircraft still use leaded fuel and can leave airborne lead dust in the areas below them.

No matter where lead is found, it is important to keep children, pregnant women, and yourself away from it and take precautions to reduce everyone's exposure.



Paint on older homes may contain lead

If your home was built before 1960, lead-based paint was probably used both inside and outside. For homes built between 1960 and 1990, small amounts of lead may be in some of the paint used. In general, the older the home or building, the greater the likelihood.

Lead-based paint in your home is a serious health hazard if it is chipping or flaking, or if it is within the reach of children or other people who might chew or pick at it. Disturbing old lead-based paint during household renovations can spread lead dust and result in high levels of exposure.

Here's what you can do about it:

- Cover painted walls with wallpaper or panelling

- Hire a professional trained to safely remove old paint
- When renovating your home, repairing flaking or peeling paint, follow the guidelines at [epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/steps.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/steps.pdf)

If you're renovating in an older home, follow these steps to reduce lead exposure:

- Wear a mask and keep children and pregnant women out of the area while sanding
- Remove or cover furniture from the work area
- Seal the work area — cover doorways and vents with plastic
- If possible, open windows in the room to increase ventilation



Tap water in homes built before 1990 may contain lead

Homes built before 1990 might have lead in the plumbing, which could include lead service lines, lead plumbing fixtures, and solder. This can increase lead levels in the tap water in these homes. The older the home the greater the risk.

If there's increased lead in your water, here's what you can do about it:

- If your home has a lead service line, contact your water system for information on replacing it
- Use a filter at the tap or pitcher filter that meets the NSF/ANSI standard for reducing lead levels
- Only use cold tap water for drinking and cooking — hot water can contain more lead
- Run the water until it is cold if it has been sitting in your pipes for a while before using it for cooking or drinking
- Avoid drinking discoloured water

If you live in an older home, have your water tested for lead at one of these certified labs:

- **ALS Environmental** 12-1329 Niakwa Road East, Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3T4
Phone: 204-255-9720
Toll Free: 1-800-607-7555
Fax: 204-255-9721
alsglobal.com/en/locations/americas/north-america/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-environmental
- **Horizon Lab Ltd.** 44055 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3K 2E8
Phone: 204-488-2035
Fax: 204-488-4772
horizonlab.ca
- **Bureau Veritas** Unit D, 675 Berry Street, Winnipeg Manitoba R3H 1A7
Phone: 204-772-7276
Toll Free: 1-888-357-7020
Fax: 204-277-2386
bvna.com

For more information on assessing, testing or reducing lead in your water see gov.mb.ca/sd/pubs/water/drinking_water/rl_d_homechildcare.pdf



Soil near older homes and in some communities may contain lead

The soil around homes built before 1990 and near old painted fences can be contaminated by traces of lead from the paint. The older the home the greater the risk. Lead in soil is more common near industrial areas or areas of past industrial activity. Due to the past use of lead in gasoline, areas near high traffic roadways can have increased lead in soil, which can contribute to lead in yard soils or house dust. Lead dust settling on the ground in soil can be breathed in, swallowed, or tracked inside the home and can contribute to blood lead levels. The health risk related to lead in soil exposure is low. Eating the soil should be avoided. This can happen when a child puts soil in their mouth while playing, or when someone eats garden vegetables without washing them first.

Here's what you can do about it:

- Thoroughly wash all garden produce
- Grow produce you pick rather than dig, like corn or berries
- Peel root vegetables and remove outer leaves of leafy plants
- Periodically add fresh soil, compost, or mulch to your garden
- Ensure new soil is approved for use in gardens
- Do not plant your vegetable garden near your fence, house, or garage if you have an older home
- Consider building a new raised-bed garden using fresh soil
- Do not use treated wood or creosote railway ties to frame or build gardens
- Wear gloves and wash your hands after gardening
- Wash garden clothes separately and leave garden shoes outside
- Use doormats at house entrances and remove footwear at the door
- Regularly mop floors and vacuum with a HEPA filter vacuum
- Do not allow children to eat soil
- Cover bare soil in flower gardens. In lawns with inconsistent grass cover, cover up with new sod, mulch, rock, or other suitable material
- Develop preferred play areas for children with appropriate new soil or other suitable surfaces
- Consider a raised sandbox or play area
- Regularly clean children's toys and pacifiers

If you have further questions about lead exposure, contact Health Links — Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.