

# REDUCE YOUR FAMILY'S RISK OF LEAD EXPOSURE FROM PAINT

## RENOVATE SAFELY



**LEAD IS A TOXIC SUBSTANCE** that has been associated with reductions in IQ scores, learning difficulties, shortened concentration spans, poor performance at school, aggression and poor outcomes over lifetimes.

Young children, especially those living in poverty, are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure and to the associated harms.



In the past lead, sometimes at very high concentrations, was added to paint, especially "enamel" paints, to fix the pigment and to speed up the drying process. When old paint peels or crumbles from surfaces, or when renovations are being undertaken, lead particles may be released, and settle in soil or dust.

During the course of their normal play and developmental activities, children may ingest appreciable amounts of lead, which may contribute to a growing burden of lead in their bodies.



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# THE FOLLOWING TIPS MAY HELP REDUCE CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO LEAD FROM PAINT APPLIED TO HOMES, SCHOOLS, TOYS, PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE AND OTHER PAINTED ITEMS:



If possible, conduct a laboratory or rapid **LEAD TEST** on paint before you start home renovations.



Certain renovations can release lead particles from paint into dust and air. **AVOID USING** belt-sanders, blow torches, heat gun, dry scraper or dry sander; these can produce large amounts of lead dust and fumes.



**SEAL OFF** parts of the home being renovated from the rest of the house. Keep children and pregnant women away from the work area.



Make sure you and workers are **AWARE** of lead-safe practices to apply during renovations.



**COLLECT AND REMOVE** paint chips frequently and on completion of renovations.



Remove dust from floors and surfaces with a **MOP OR CLEAN CLOTH** dipped into water with added detergent. Pay particular attention to areas around windows, doors and play areas.



Keep the areas in which children play as dust-free and **CLEAN AS POSSIBLE**.



Use paper or duct tape to **COVER AREAS** with chipping or peeling paint.



**WASH** children's hands and toys often with soap and water, especially before eating, after playing and before sleeping.



Keep children's **NAILS** clean and short.



Gently **DISCOURAGE** children from putting their fingers or non-food items into their mouths.



**WASH** bottles, pacifiers (dummies), toys and stuffed animals regularly.



**BATHE PETS** on a regular basis to reduce the amount of dirt they bring in from the outside.



Clean or **REMOVE SHOES** before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead particles from soil. The clothing of those undertaking renovation work should be washed separately from those of other household members.



**DISPOSE** of lead paint in a toxic waste disposal site.



Ensure that children eat a nutritious and **HEALTHY DIET**, including foods rich in calcium and iron, such as spinach, meat, fish and eggs.



If you suspect that your child may have been exposed to lead paint, take the child to a health clinic or doctor for a health assessment. **A BLOOD TEST** is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON LEAD POISONING

Go to: Resource Materials | South African Medical Research Council ([samrc.ac.za](http://samrc.ac.za)).



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