



Sedgwick County...
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Lead Poisoning

What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning is a preventable disease that affects children's health. Lead is a toxic metal that produces many bad health effects. Childhood lead poisoning occurs in all population groups and income brackets. There is no safe level of lead.

How can lead poisoning affect the body?

Lead poisoning can be difficult to recognize and can damage a child's central nervous system, brain, kidneys, and reproductive system. Even low levels of lead are related with decreased intelligence, impaired neurobehavioral development, decreased stature and growth, and impaired hearing acuity.

How does lead enter the body?

Lead enters the body in the air we breath and through what we eat or drink. Adults absorb about 5- 15% of ingested lead into their blood stream, while children absorb about 50% of ingested lead into their blood stream. Lead is more easily absorbed into growing bodies.

Who is the most vulnerable to lead poisoning?

Fetuses of pregnant women, infants, and children ages 6 months to 6 years are more vulnerable to lead exposure than adults since lead is more easily absorbed into growing bodies.

What are the symptoms of lead poisoning?

Most children do not show symptoms. If they do, signs and symptoms may include headache, lack of appetite, vomiting, fatigue, anemia, stomachache, constipation, or seizures.

What are some sources of lead I might find in or around my home?

The greatest risk of exposure to lead is from swallowing or breathing in lead paint chips or contaminated soil or dust. Lead-based paint can be found in most homes built before 1978. Although less common, lead also can be found in some household plumbing materials and water service lines. Lead can also be found in woodwork, windowsills, eating and playing surfaces. Non-glossy vinyl window blinds can create a lead dust hazard that can be inhaled, or can settle on toys, floors, tables or carpet.

What about lead in drinking water?

Lead in drinking water is not a common occurrence. Lead piping and water pipes with lead solder can be a source of lead poisoning. In many cases, the sediment from the water coats the pipes and creates a barrier between the exposure source and the water itself. The following tips regarding lead and drinking water may be helpful.

- Run the tap 1-3 minutes to dilute lead content of water that has sat in piping for long periods of time.
- Hot water can contain higher levels of lead. Use cold water for cooking to decrease the amount of lead exposure due to lead piping.
- If your water has been tested for lead and the result was above the recommended level, see your health care provider for a blood lead test.
- If your water has been tested for lead and the result was above a recommended level, filtered or alternative drinking water sources are encouraged until the lead level has been returned to recommended levels.
- Boiling water will not get rid of lead.



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Health Department

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fastFACTS

about Sedgwick County Government

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Some questions to assess your child's risk for lead exposure

Does your child:

- Live in or visit a house or apartment built before 1978?
- Live in or regularly visit a house or apartment built before 1978 with previous ongoing or planned renovation or remodeling?
- Interact with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead? (i.e. remodeling, welding, or automotive repair)
- Live near a lead smelter, battery plant or other lead industry?
- Use pottery, ceramic, or crystal ware for cooking, eating or drinking?

Can I minimize my child's exposure to lead?

Parents can protect their children from lead poisoning. Cleaning dusty areas of the home with a wet cloth and warm soapy water is one way to safely remove lead dangers.

Can lead poisoning be detected and treated?

Yes. Early identification and treatment of lead poisoning reduces the risk of suffering permanent damage. A blood lead test is the only way to tell if a child has a high blood level.

Where can I go to get tested?

Ask your health care provider about getting a blood lead test. The Sedgwick County Health Department offers blood lead tests daily through the immunization clinic located at 2716 W Central. If you have questions or concerns or would like more information call 660-7321.

For more information

Sedgwick County Health Department
660-7300

EPA Safe Drinking Water Hotline:
1-800-426-4791

National Lead Information Center:
1-800-424-LEAD
www.epa.gov/lead

NSF International:
www.nsf.org