

## What We Do

The West Virginia Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Project monitors all West Virginia children with an elevated blood lead level.

Confirmed lead poisoning in children can be very serious and requires close monitoring using established protocols and guidelines.

Children are screened in provider facilities such as community health centers, private provider offices, federally qualified health centers, and local health departments. Blood lead results are then reported by laboratories and clinics to the program.

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*Legislative Rule §64-42 in conjunction with W. Va. Code §16.35, requires all children shall receive a screening test at one year and again at two years of age, and children 36 to 72 months of age if they have not been screened previously.*



## Contact Information

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West Virginia Department of Health  
Bureau for Public Health  
Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health  
West Virginia Childhood Lead Poisoning  
Prevention Project



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Exposure to lead can seriously harm  
a child's health.

**Lead poisoning is preventable.**





## What is Lead Poisoning?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal. When lead gets into the body, it is a poison that harms people. It can make people very sick - especially children.

It's a condition caused by swallowing or inhaling lead. Even small amounts of lead can be harmful. Young children are at the greatest risk for two main reasons:

- Their bodies absorb lead more easily than adults' do.
- Young children often put things in their mouths that could have lead on them, such as their hands and toys.

Lead can affect adults too - it can even harm an unborn baby. Pregnant women need to be careful.

## Is Your Child At Risk?

Lead can harm any child because it's present in many sources. Lead can harm children whether they live in a city, suburb, or rural area. Lead can be found in many places, including homes, soil, and water. Once it is in the environment, it stays there until it is removed.

Children may be exposed to lead at home, school, day care, or playgrounds.

Lead can be found in older homes where water comes in through lead pipes and in older houses or furniture painted with lead-based paints. As the paint ages, it cracks, chips, and creates dust. Children can be harmed if they eat, breathe, or touch lead chips and dust.

Lead isn't absorbed through the skin. Lead poisoning is caused by eating, drinking, touching, or breathing in the toxic metal.

## Screening

Preventing exposure to lead is the best way to avoid lasting harm from lead poisoning. Lead screening is the only way to know if a child has lead poisoning.

A simple blood test can show how much lead is in your child's blood. Talk to your child's health care provider if screening is recommended for your child.

## Effects of Lead Poisoning

Lead affects the brain, nerves, and other parts of the body. It can cause learning, physical, and behavior problems. Lead poisoning may lead to slower growth.

Pregnant women exposed to lead can pass it to their unborn baby or infant during pregnancy and lactation through blood and breast milk. Lead exposure increases the risk of premature birth, low birth weight, and miscarriage or stillbirth.

There is no safe lead level, risks increase as lead levels rise. At very high levels, lead may cause coma, convulsions, or even death.

## Keeping Your Child Safe

Lead poisoning is a serious threat to children. Knowing the facts about lead is the first and most important step in prevention. Below are a few simple steps to reduce exposure:

- Clean home regularly
- Watch what goes in your child's mouth
- Wash hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often
- Remove shoes before entering the house
- Give foods high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Use cold water for drinking and cooking
- Renovate safely

