



## Children's Health

# Lead Poisoning

### HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD

Lead has been used in plumbing pipes, paint, typesetting, sash weights in windows, soldering and numerous other products for generations. When lead is ingested, it accumulates in the bone marrow, nerves and kidneys. Lead dust can be swallowed and inhaled. In many cases, there are no symptoms of lead poisoning.

Caution should be exercised in homes built before 1980. Lead may be found in the water in homes where plumbing was installed before the 1930s. Lead paint was used before the 1940s. Lead paint in good condition is not usually a problem, except in places where painted surfaces rub against each other and create dust or peeling or where children might scrape it off and ingest it.

#### SYMPTOMS OF LEAD POISONING

- irritability
- mental retardation
- hyperactivity
- decreased growth
- impaired hearing

#### TIPS TO HELP PREVENT LEAD POISONING

- If you live in an older home and paint is flaking off, consult your local health department and have the paint tested for lead.
- Keep all areas of your home as dust-free as possible.
- Avoid removing lead-based paint yourself.
- Find where the water main enters your house. Gently tap one of the joints. If it dents easily, it's probably made of lead. Have your water tested.
- Never let children play with old lead toys, jewelry or curtain or fishing weights.
- Never serve food on imported earthenware dishes since they may contain lead.
- Keep surfaces and floors clean.
- Make sure children don't chew on anything covered with lead paint (windowsills, cribs or playpens).
- Never burn painted wood.
- When in doubt, have your child tested. A blood test takes only 10 minutes and the results are usually ready within a week.

