



## 1. What is lead and where can I find it?

Lead is a metal that occurs naturally in soil, rocks, air, and water. Lead can also be found in our environment as a result of industrial activities. Lead and lead alloys have been used widely in the production of batteries, metal products, and building materials.

## 2. How might I be exposed to lead?

- Consuming lead-based paint chips or peels from homes built before 1978.
- Inhaling house dust that contains lead.
- Drinking water or eating food that contains lead.
- Eating imported candies that are contaminated with lead.
- Taking herbal and natural supplements that are contaminated with lead.
- Using pots and dishes that are old, handmade, or made outside of the U.S.

## 3. How can lead affect my health?

Lead exposure is most harmful to young children and unborn children, who may be exposed through their mothers. Lead can damage the brain, kidneys and nervous system, affecting a child's mental and physical growth. Symptoms of lead poisoning may include headaches, nausea, weakness, and trouble eating, sleeping or paying attention. However, most children who have lead poisoning do not look or act sick.

## 4. How can I reduce my exposure to lead?

- Be aware of lead paint hazards in your home.
- Run your tap water for 30 seconds before drinking or cooking with it.
- Feed your children healthy meals and snacks that include foods rich in calcium and iron.
- Your doctor can perform a blood test to measure the amount of lead in your blood or your child's blood.
- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (1-800-LA-4-LEAD) can assist you in locating companies properly trained and licensed in the identification and correction of lead hazards.

### Sources

1. *Lead*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>
2. *Lead*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>
3. *Lead*. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <http://epa.gov/lead>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website:  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.