


LEAD GUIDANCE

HOW TO INTERPRET YOUR SOIL RESULTS

While no amount of lead is safe for human health, thresholds set by government agencies can help you understand your potential risk.



If lead levels are elevated **above 1,000 parts per million (ppm)**, seek out additional testing, as levels can vary widely even within a small area. Soils above this level are **considered hazardous waste**. Consider taking action to remove or cover the soil, as young children, pregnant people, and others are at risk of lead poisoning. Consult your doctor about blood lead level testing for you and your family.

1,000 ppm Hazardous Waste Threshold

In 2024, the EPA set a safety threshold for lead levels of **200 parts per million (ppm)**, down from the previous level of 400 ppm. Soils above this threshold may be hazardous, and more rigorous testing is recommended. Children should not play in this soil, and consult your doctor about seeking blood level testing. Consider hiring lead abatement contractors to remove or permanently cover the soil. When gardening, be sure to completely clean all root vegetables and low-hanging leaves. Consider installing raised beds or other topsoil.

200 ppm EPA Screening Level

Cal EPA/OEHHA uses a level of **80 ppm** as their screening level cutoff where concentrations may be unsafe for young children, fetuses, and pregnant people.

80 ppm EPA Screening Level

Lead occurs naturally in soil at low levels. **Below 80 ppm**, you can grow food in these soils and children can play in them. Make sure to wash your hands and any crops, as you would normally when handling soil.

If your sample's result is "**<LOD**", that means lead levels were below the testing instrument's limit of detection (LOD).