



Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

“As Attorney General, I work each day toward creating safer communities for children – communities in which parents feel confident that their kids are safe from school violence, sex offenders, and even online predators. However, children also face an equally serious threat from a less obvious culprit: lead.”

Attorney General Lisa Madigan

Is Lead Poisoning a Serious Danger to the Health and Safety of My Kids?

The dangers of lead poisoning are very real. Most harmful to children ages six and younger, lead poisoning can cause irreversible neurological damage, intelligence loss, attention disorders, and behavioral and other developmental problems.

How Are Children Exposed to Lead Poisoning?

Children are most commonly exposed to lead poisoning through lead-based paint in older homes. Although lead-based paint was banned for use in housing in 1978, homes built before the ban may still contain the leaded paint. Poisoning most often occurs as a result of children inhaling or ingesting either lead dust or paint chips.

Children may also be exposed to lead contained in children’s products. While accessible lead in consumer products has been banned, discoveries of both accessible lead and lead paint in or on children’s toys and clothing have prompted millions of unit recalls.

How Can I Find Out if My Child Has Lead Poisoning?

For the most part, unless lead poisoning is very severe, symptoms are rare. It is virtually impossible to detect without a blood test.

What Can I Do to Protect My Children from Lead?

Lead poisoning is completely preventable. You can protect your children by following some basic guidelines:

- Get your children, ages six months through six years, tested for lead each year.
- If you live in an older home, have it inspected for lead. Call the Illinois Department of Public Health’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-800-545-2200.
- Regularly wet clean floors, windowsills, and other surfaces. Take off shoes before entering the house.
- Wash children’s hands before they eat, after they play outside, and before they go to sleep. Find out if you have any recalled products in your home. A list of recalled products is available at www.cpsc.gov. You can also visit www.KidsInDanger.org for more information on recalled products.
- Stay up-to-date on recalled products. You can sign up to receive e-mail notification of recalls at www.cpsc.gov. Kids In Danger also sends out monthly e-mail alerts, which you can sign up for by visiting www.KidsInDanger.org or calling 312-595-0649.

Where Can I Get More Information?

If you would like to know more about childhood lead poisoning please visit Lead Safe Illinois at www.lead-safe-illinois.org.