

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION & NUTRITION



What is lead poisoning?

- Lead is a serious environmental concern for children in the United States.
- Lead is a toxic metal that is found in our environment in many items such as deteriorated paint in older homes, soil, dust, some folk remedies, products, etc.
- Lead exposure is more dangerous to young children and unborn babies since their minds are still developing, and very small amounts of lead can seriously affect their health and future development.
- Lead can cause harm to a child's brain and cause learning, hearing and behavioral problems, as well as damage to kidneys and other organs.
- Lead can stop good minerals that we need such as iron and calcium from doing their job in our bodies and affect growth and development.
- These effects can be long-lasting and cause permanent damage.

Have your child tested for lead in blood.

Remember: A child with lead in blood will often have no symptoms.



The only way to know if a child has lead in blood is through a blood lead test.

All children in Oklahoma are required to have a blood lead test at 12 months and again at 24 months of age, or at least one test if never tested and they are still under six years of age.

Ask your doctor or health care provider for this important test today.

What can you do as a parent?



A healthy diet can protect your child from some of the effects of lead poisoning.

Give your child four to six small, low-fat meals per day.

Children who eat the right foods absorb less lead than those who do not.

Children will absorb more lead on an empty stomach than children with full stomachs.

For more information and resources, contact the Oklahoma Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (405) 426-8311 | Okppp@health.ok.gov



Lead Poisoning Prevention

Choose the right food!

Foods that are rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C are helpful in protecting children from lead poisoning.

IRON

Your body needs iron to make red blood cells. Children with iron deficiencies may absorb more lead. There are many great foods that are rich in iron that you can include in your child's diet.



Meat & seafood: Chicken, pork, beef, lamb, mutton, wild game, liver, hearts and kidneys, clams and shrimp, oysters, scallops, sardines

Beans: Pintos, black, navy, kidney, lima, garbanzo, lentils, soy

Vegetables: Dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale, mustard, collard and dandelion greens

Fruits: Raisins, dried peaches and apricots, prunes and prune juice

Other: Eggs, molasses, peanut butter, almonds, pecans, pine nuts, whole grains or enriched white flour and breads, iron fortified cereals

CALCIUM

Calcium is needed to build and maintain strong and healthy bones and teeth in children. Children with sufficient calcium will absorb less lead.



Milk & milk substitutes: Milk, buttermilk, evaporated and dried milk, yogurt, frozen yogurt, yogurt drinks, ice cream, cheeses

Foods that contain milk: Cream soups and sauces, flan, custard, pudding, pancakes

Seafood: Oysters, sardines, canned salmon

Other: Corn tortillas, bulgur, eggs, broccoli, collard greens, spinach, kale, almond, pecans, pine nuts, calcium-fortified orange juice

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is needed for strong and healthy blood vessels, teeth, bones and cartilage. Foods that contain vitamin C should be served along with iron-rich foods to help the body absorb iron.



Vegetables: Broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, corn, peas, tomatoes and tomato juice, tomatillos, cauliflower, raw chile, salsa, sweet green and red peppers, onions, summer squash, pumpkin, yams, sweet and white potatoes, avocado, dark green leafy vegetables such as kale, collard, turnip and mustard greens

Fruits and fruit juices: Oranges and orange juice, grapefruits and grapefruit juice, melons, berries, kiwi, guava, mango, papaya, persimmon, cantaloupe, lychee, baobab and jujube

Other tips

- Keep children's fingernails short so lead dust cannot be easily trapped.
- Wash bottle nipples, pacifiers and toys that are placed in children's mouths often.
- Do not store foods or liquids in glazed ceramic or leaded crystalware.
- Avoid vegetables, fruits or herbs that may be grown in lead-contaminated soil.
- Make foods that are high in solid fats (cakes, cookies, pizza, cheese, sausages) occasional and not everyday foods.
- Always let water run for a few minutes and always use cold water for cooking or drinking.
- Eat vegetables raw when possible since overcooking vegetables reduces vitamin content.
- Cook with olive or vegetable oil instead of lard or butter.

Nutritional resources

Women Infants and Children (WIC)

<https://oklahoma.gov/health/services/children-family-health/wic.html>

EPA

https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-01/documents/fight_lead_poisoning_with_a_healthy_diet_2019.pdf

LEAD POISONING IS 100% PREVENTABLE, BUT MAY ROB A CHILD OF THEIR FUTURE POTENTIAL.