

# REDUCING LEAD HAZARDS IN THE HOME



The fact is, you can protect your child from lead poisoning. It takes removing or managing lead hazards, such as lead paint dust, and by using proper lead dust cleaning techniques on a regular basis.

Lead poisoning is 100% preventable. And how you clean your home can make all the difference. Please read this flyer to find out more.

## Seven facts about lead-based paint and lead dust

### FACT #1

The use of lead paint in homes was banned in 1978. Homes built before 1978 may contain lead paint. Older homes, built prior to 1950, are very likely to contain lead paint.

### FACT #2

Lead dust is produced from lead paint. As the paint gets older, it may be damaged by moisture or friction if it's disturbed.

### FACT #3

Lead dust is very fine; it cannot be seen.

### FACT #4

Lead dust is the most common source of lead poisoning for everyone, especially children and pets. Children between the ages of one and two are at the greatest risk for being poisoned.

### FACT #5

Lead poisoning usually occurs when children put lead dust in their mouths after touching it. Lead dust can be found on many surfaces such as windowsills, floors and even toys. When children put these surfaces in their mouths, they are putting lead dust in their mouths as well.

### FACT #6

Children may also eat chips of lead paint. The paint chips may come from household lead paint, as on old windows or porches, or from paint chips in bare soil in the yard.

### FACT #7

Your local health department will try to find where the lead paint and lead hazards are found in your home. With this information they can determine whether the lead hazards in your home should be removed or managed.

**WARNING: PREGNANT WOMEN MUST NOT CLEAN UP LEAD DUST  
BECAUSE IT CAN HARM THE DEVELOPING FETUS.**

## Before you begin cleaning

- Remove children and pets from the rooms being cleaned.
- Wear old clothes and plastic gloves.

## Cleaning tools

- Plastic or rubber gloves, like those used for washing dishes
- Plastic trash bags
- Two (2) or three (3) plastic buckets
- A spray bottle
- Lint-free rags or paper towels that can be thrown away
- Any general purpose cleaning product. Do not use bleach.
- Industrial vacuum with a HEPA filter, known as a HEPA vacuum

**WARNING: WHEN VACUUMING, YOU MUST USE AN INDUSTRIAL HEPA VACUUM ONLY. DO NOT USE AN ORDINARY VACUUM. PLEASE CONSULT THE CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH OR YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CLEAN SAFELY.**

## Cleaning surfaces

- When removing large paint chips, wear plastic gloves. Place them into a plastic trash bag.
- Remove smaller paint chips by vacuuming with a HEPA vacuum.
- If sweeping paint chips, mist the paint chips with water from a spray bottle, then sweep them up and put them into a trash bag.
- Clean one room at a time. Clean the highest surfaces first and work your way to the floor.
- Always start at the farthest corner of the room and work your way to the door.

## Cleaning carpets and rugs

Vacuum all carpeting and rugs using an industrial HEPA vacuum ONLY. Steam cleaning is also an option.

**Wall-to-wall carpets:** Vacuum the rug using an industrial HEPA vacuum. Vacuum the rug slowly from top to bottom and left to right.

**Area rugs:** Begin vacuuming at the top of the rug with a HEPA vacuum as described above. Next, fold the rug in half and vacuum the back of the rug and floor normally. Do the same to the other half of the rug.

**Scatter rugs:** Wash scatter rugs in a washing machine. Do not put in any clothes in the washing machine with the scatter rugs.

## Wet cleaning

Wet cleaning should be used for all non-carpeting surfaces, including wood floors, windowsills, window wells, counters, radiators and all of your children's toys. A wet rag is best for windowsills and window wells. Toys can be cleaned in the sink or tub.

## Step-by-step

1. Fill one bucket with water and cleaning solution and another bucket with plain water.
2. Wet a clean rag or paper towel with the cleaning solution in the first bucket. Squeeze out excess water. Use a different cleaning rag or paper towel in each bucket.
3. Wipe the surface with the damp rag or paper towel from first bucket.
4. Repeat cleaning the same surface with the new rag or paper towel from second bucket
5. Rinse surface with a rag or paper towel with the plain water.
6. Empty and rinse the buckets and refill for each room.
7. Repeat steps 2 through 5 for all non-carpeted surfaces in all rooms and hallways.

## Prevent lead hazards

### Inside your home

- Move furniture to block your child from paint that is chipping and peeling. Block any painted areas on which your child might bite, chew or suck, such as windowsills.
- Move your child's play area or bedroom to a room that has no chipping or peeling paint.
- Cover windowsills with contact paper.
- Keep windows closed that have peeling or flaking paint to prevent lead paint dust from moving throughout the home.
- Tell babysitters about lead hazards in your home.
- Wash and dry your child's hands often, especially before meals.
- Use tacky tape to remove loose, flaking paint, if only a small area is flaking (less than one square foot).
- Repair small holes in walls or doors with spackle or caulking.
- Attach felt pads to feet of drawers and cabinets that have lead paint.
- Wash your child's toys before allowing your child to play with them.
- Wash your child's toys weekly.

### Outside your home

- Place doormats on the inside and outside of the main entrance to your home so that you don't track lead-contaminated soil into the house.
- Take shoes off before entering the house.
- Don't let your child play in bare soil areas.
- Keep your pet on a leash and out of bare soil. Your pet can become lead poisoned and can track lead dust into your home.

## Prevent lead poisoning before you can't

To find out more, contact the Connecticut Department of Public Health Lead and Healthy Homes Program at 860-509-7299. Or, you can call your local health department.

[ct.gov/PreventLead](https://ct.gov/PreventLead)

