

Nutrition Newsletter

Cayuga County Health & Human Services WIC Program Fall 2004

Lead Poisoning What You Can Do to Protect Your Child

Lead poisoning occurs **without** any **obvious symptoms** and **harms** **your child's body**



Lead is a poisonous metal that our bodies cannot use. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing and behavioral problems, and can harm your child's brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead in the body stops good vitamins such as iron and calcium from working right.

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood test. Ask your doctor to test your child.

Where is Lead Found? ... In lead based paint, contaminated dust and soil. Lead based paint is a hazard if it is peeling, chipping, chalking, or cracking. The older the home you live in, the more likely it is to contain lead based paint. Contaminated dust forms when lead paint is scraped or sanded. Contaminated soil occurs when exterior lead based paint from houses, building or other structures flakes or peels and gets into the soil. Soil near roadways may also be contaminated from past use of leaded gasoline in cars. Avoid these areas when planting vegetable gardens.

Prevention is Everyone's Responsibility

- ▶ Be alert for chipping and flaking paint.
- ▶ Make sure child only puts safe, clean items in mouth.
- ▶ Store food in glass, plastic or stainless steel containers
 - not in open cans
- ▶ Have children wash hands before eating.
- ▶ Feed your child a well balanced diet that is high in iron and calcium.



Eat Healthy Foods

Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs. Provide your child with four to six small meals during the day. The following nutrients can help protect your child from lead poisoning.

Iron Rich Foods

Normal levels of iron work to protect the body from the harmful effects of lead. Good sources of dietary iron include:
Lean red meats, fish and chicken
Iron fortified cereals
Dried fruits (raises, prunes)



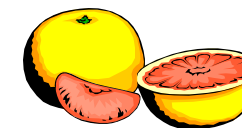
Calcium Rich Foods

Calcium reduces lead adsorption and also helps make teeth and bones strong. Good sources of dietary calcium include:
Milk
Yogurt
Cheese
Green Leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, collard greens)



Vitamin C Rich Foods

Vitamin C and iron rich foods work together to reduce lead absorption. Good sources of vitamin C include:
Oranges, orange juice
Grapefruits, grapefruit juice
Tomatoes, tomato juice
Green peppers



Test Your Knowledge on Lead Poisoning Circle Your Answer

Lead poisoning can cause learning and behavioral problems	T or F
Children with empty stomachs tend to absorb lead more easily.	T or F
To know if you have Lead Poisoning you need to get a blood test.	T or F

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