

PROTECT YOUR KIDS

YOUR KIDS >> WHAT TO KNOW >> WHY CHILDREN ARE AT RISK

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(5323)

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IN YOUR HOME

Why children are at risk

Lead is poisonous because it interferes with some of the body's basic functions. Our bodies can't tell the difference between lead and calcium, which is a mineral that strengthens bones. Like calcium, lead remains in the bloodstream for a few weeks. Then it is absorbed into the bones, where it can collect for a lifetime.

Why children are at risk

- Children ages six and younger are especially at risk for three reasons:
 - their brains and nervous systems are still developing
 - at this age toys and fingers often end up in their mouths
 - their bodies are more likely to absorb lead than adults'

What are the symptoms

- The symptoms of lead poisoning are not easy to detect. Sometimes no symptoms occur, and sometimes the symptoms are the same as those of more common illnesses, such as the flu.
- Some of the early signs and symptoms of lead poisoning in children are:
 - Persistent tiredness or hyperactivity
 - Irritability
 - Loss of appetite
 - Weight loss
 - Reduced attention span
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Constipation

Find out if your child has elevated blood lead levels. Ask your pediatrician to do a simple blood test.

Even exposure to low levels of lead can cause:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Behavior and learning problems, such as hyperactivity
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Headaches
- In rare cases of acute lead poisoning from ingestion of lead, children can suffer seizures, coma and even death.