

ERIE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Alternative Sources of Lead

LEAD POISONING PREVENTION AND YOU

Sources for lead poisoning

The most common sources of lead poisoning in children are lead contaminated house dust from deteriorated lead-based paint and lead in soil, but there are other sources of exposure for children. These additional sources are less common, but not less dangerous.

Spices

- Lead concentrations in spices are highest when they are imported from another country without strict guidelines. Lead can be found in candy, wrappers, certain ethnic foods, such as chapulines (dried grasshoppers), and packages with lead closures.

Pottery

- Lead may get into foods or liquids that have been stored in ceramics, pottery, china, or crystal with lead in it. Lead-glazed dishes usually come from other countries.

Jewelry

- Lead has been found in inexpensive children's jewelry sold in vending machines and large volume discount stores across the country. It is important to make sure that children don't handle or mouth any jewelry.

Herbal remedies

- Some folk medicines contain lead. They are often from the Middle East, Southeast Asia,

India, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico.

- Ayurvedic remedies may contain herbs, minerals & metals.

Cosmetics

- Cosmetics can also contain lead. Kohl, Surma, and Kajal used to accent the eyes are examples of cosmetics that often contain lead.

Toys

- Some toys containing unsafe levels of lead continue to be sold. Other products containing lead have also been recalled, such as crayons, chalk, clothing, and children's products painted with lead-based paint.



Did you know...

PAINT COATING

Lead has been found in inexpensive children's jewelry sold in vending machines and dollar stores across the country.

Sources: NYS Dept. of Health, US Environmental Protection Agency, Center for Disease Control

Why is lead a health concern

Lead is toxic - especially to young children under the age of six. Even very small amounts can be harmful. Lead affects the body in many ways and can cause brain damage, learning disabilities, development delays, hearing loss, behavioral problems, and loss of IQ points. Adults can experience loss of motor control, high blood pressure, headache, and fertility problems.

Children can accidentally absorb lead into their bodies by breath-

ing it in or swallowing it.

Once absorbed, lead is very difficult to remove and can remain in the body for years. Preventing exposure is the best way to avoid lasting harm.



The signs of lead poisoning are not always obvious. A simple blood test can be done to detect lead.

The New York State Department of Health requires that all children be tested for lead at the age of 1 and 2 and, if determined to be high risk for exposure, tested annually through the age of 5 years old.

What you can do to protect your family

Use only certified USDA or FDA products at home

- Lead is a toxin so keep all products potentially containing lead away from children
- The simplest thing you can do to protect your family from lead poisoning is to always buy USDA certified approved products.
- Avoid using imported cosmetics, spices, pottery, and herbal remedies that are not certified or are not produced in regulated manufacturing plants.
- Avoid using Kohl, Surma, and Kajal that are not approved by USDA.
- Keep ceremonial powders away from children to prevent accidentally ingesting potentially hazardous substances.
- Avoid buying inexpensive jewelry from places like dollar stores because they might be coated with lead paint.
- Avoid buying toys that are from another country, since they may contain lead based paint coating
- Medicines from the Middle East, Latin America, India, and China can contain lead.
- Check candy manufacturer before giving it to children. Be sure they are certified.
- If you are unsure of products safety always check Consumer Product Safety Commission website for possible recalls due to toxins.
- Testing children who consume spices or herbal remedies regularly might lead to earlier detection of elevated blood lead levels.
- If you think that you or family member may have consumed lead, see your health care provider for blood test.



Sindoor is used in Hindu culture and may contain harmful level of lead. Limit the use of products from unknown manufacturers and keep them away from children.



Some herbal remedies contain lead

- Lead has been found in some traditional herbal remedies used by East Indian, Indian, Middle Eastern, West Asian, and Hispanic cultures. Some herbal remedies can contain herbs, minerals, metals, or animal products. Lead and other heavy metals are put into certain herbal medicines because these metals are thought to be useful in treating some ailments. Sometimes lead accidentally gets into the medicine during grinding, during coloring, or from the package.
- People selling some herbal remedies may not know whether it contains lead. You cannot tell if a medicine has lead by looking at or tasting it. Consuming even small amounts of lead can be harmful. There is no safe blood lead level.
- **Always use an accredited laboratory to ensure the accuracy and reliability of analyses.**
- **List of accredited labs.** <https://>

Other tips

Lead levels in jewelry, pottery, spices, and herbal remedies are more likely to be high when:

- Products are grown & produced in countries polluted by leaded gasoline, smelters, battery manufacturing plants, and mines.
- Purchasing toys and jewelry from vending machine or dollar stores.
- Products are adulterated deliberately with lead to enhance color or increase weight.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Erie County Department of Health
(716) 961-6800
www.erie.gov/health/lead

NYS Department of Health
1-800-458-1158
www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead

Environmental Protection Agency
1-800-424-LEAD
www.epa.gov/lead

Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)
1-800-232-4636
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/sources.htm