

How do I test an object or my home for lead?

You should assume that any home built before 1978 contains some lead paint, shellac or varnish. The older the home the more likely these coatings contain lead. Other items such as ceramic dishes or pottery, painted toys, children's jewelry and mini-blinds may contain lead as well. To be sure, you should test your home and items in your home for lead.

There are three methods you can use to test your home for lead.

- Home Test Kits
- Environmental Laboratories
- Licensed Lead Risk Assessors

Home Test Kits

Different test kits are used to test different types of materials for lead; make sure to use the correct kit for the type of sample you are testing. A home test kit can work on paint, ceramics, metals (jewelry), plastics ([toys](#), mini-blinds), drinking water, dust, or soil. You can purchase test kits at paint stores, hardware stores, or building supply stores. The instructions are easy to follow.

Remember to read the full directions of your test kit! Home test kits are low cost, easy to use, and produce quick results. However, they don't tell you how much lead is present and may give a false positive result.

Environmental Laboratories

A sample tested by an environmental laboratory will tell you how much lead is present. This is important because the more lead present in an object, the more dangerous it is—and the greater the chance of a child becoming lead poisoned by it. You can have paint, dust, soil, or drinking water samples tested by a certified laboratory. Call the lab and ask for directions on the way to collect your sample, how much material to collect, and how to store it before bringing it to the lab. The sample must be taken correctly or the results will not be accurate. Certified laboratories in Minnesota include:

Braun Intertec Corporation
(952) 995-2688
Tests paint chips, dust, soil, water, other

Legend Technical Services, Inc.
(651) 642-1150
Tests paint chips, dust

City of Minneapolis - Department of Health
(612) 673-2160
Tests paint chips, dust, soil, water, other

St. Paul-Ramsey County - Department of Public Health
(651) 266-1321
Tests paint chips, dust, water

If you use a certified laboratory, the results will tell you how much lead is present in each sample you are testing. In some cases the lab will also explain the results to you. However, certified labs are more expensive than home test kits and take longer for results. Lab results are usually received within five to ten business days.

A home test kit could be used to find out if lead is present. If you find lead, a sample could then be sent to a certified laboratory to see how much is present.

Licensed Lead Risk Assessors

The Minnesota Department of Health operates a licensing program for lead risk assessors. These assessors must successfully complete an approved training course and annual continuing education. You can hire a licensed risk assessor to evaluate a home for sources of lead. The risk assessor will identify sources of lead and can make recommendations for dealing with the lead hazards. The risk assessor can also test a home before remodeling and after cleanup. The post cleanup tests will make sure all the harmful lead dust has been removed. To find a licensed lead risk assessor go to: http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead/prof/lead_party_query.cfm

How do I get more information?

For more information about lead please contact the Lead Program at the Minnesota Department of Health. You can contact us by calling (651) 201-4610 or by visiting our website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/lead>.