

## What can I do while pregnant to prevent health effects from lead?

- Tell your doctor if you work with or around lead
- Do not prepare or eat food using imported or antique pottery, or leaded crystal
- Talk with your doctor if you take any medicines or vitamins. Lead is found in some herbal remedies and supplements
- Keep out of work areas during repair or remodeling of a house built before 1978
- Tell your doctor about any non-food items you are eating, such as soil or clay
- Have everyone in the house who comes in contact with lead from a hobby or work:
  - Shower after working with lead
  - Wash clothes separately from other household clothing

## MORE RESOURCES

### Women, Infants and Children (WIC):

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/fh/wic/index.html>

### Environmental Protection Agency's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule:

<https://cfpub.epa.gov/flpp/pub/index.cfm?do=main.firmSearch>

### Minnesota Occupational Safety & Health:

<http://www.dli.mn.gov/MnOsha.asp>

For more information about lead, visit the MDH website: [www.health.state.mn.us/lead](http://www.health.state.mn.us/lead) or by calling 651-201-4620 or 1-800-657-3908

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St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

*To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-4620. Printed on recycled paper with at least 30% post-consumer waste.*

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# Lead Exposure during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

KEEPING YOUR BABY SAFE



## Lead is a poison. It can harm you and your unborn baby.

Too much lead in your body can:

- Put you at risk of miscarriage
- Create high blood pressure in pregnant women
- Cause your baby to be born too early or too small
- Hurt your baby's brain, kidneys and nervous system
- Cause your child to have learning or behavior problems

## Should I get tested for lead?

There are no signs or symptoms of lead exposure until you are very sick. If you might come in contact with lead, get a lead test by:

- Visiting your medical clinic (as part of your prenatal exam), OR
- Contacting your local public health office for information on services.

## How might lead get into my body?

Lead enters your body when you breathe in fumes or dust, or swallow something that has lead in it. You sometimes come into contact with lead at work or in a hobby where lead is used. Some examples include:

- Remodeling and construction
- Manufacturing or recycling items that contain lead
- Making stained glass or jewelry with lead solder
- Spending time at shooting ranges or reloading shotgun shells

## What should I do if my home is being renovated or repaired?

- For homes built before 1978, repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make dangerous lead dust. Pregnant women should leave the house while work is ongoing.
- Be sure the person doing the work uses lead-safe practices.
- If hiring a contractor, hire a lead-safe certified renovation firm.

## What foods help protect against the effects of lead?

These foods may help protect you and your unborn baby:

- **Calcium** is in milk, yogurt, cheese and green, leafy vegetables like spinach.
- **Iron** is in lean red meat, beans, cereals and spinach.
- **Vitamin C** is in oranges, green and red peppers, broccoli, tomatoes and juices.

*Women who meet the income requirements may qualify for nutritious foods under the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. For more information, contact your local WIC office.*

## Is it safe to breastfeed if I have been exposed to lead?

Breastfeeding is still recommended for most women. If you have been told you have an elevated blood lead level, talk to your doctor about how often to check your baby's lead levels.