

# Lead (Pb) Health Hazards

Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body, often over period of months or years. Even small amounts of lead can cause health problems. A piece of lead the size of a grain of salt can elevate a child to poisoned level.

Lead based paint and lead contaminated dust are the most common sources of lead poisoning in children. Lead dust is usually not able to be seen by the naked eye.

Lower Socioeconomic areas are effected most often specifically nutritionally deficient children. Lack of home cleanliness and or maintenance are root causes of lead poisoning

Lead causes irreversible mental and psychological disorders, even in very small amounts lead can result in:

- Behavior and learning problems
- hyperactivity and Lower IQ
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia

In some cases, lead ingestion can cause seizures, coma, and even death. Elevated lead levels are often diagnosed as ADD/ADHD

Lead can also be transmitted to a developing child during pregnancy and may result in:

- Reduced growth of the fetus
- Premature birth

Children and pregnant women are at the most risk, however lead is also harmful to other adults. Adults exposed to lead can suffer from:

- Cardiovascular effects, increased blood pressure and hypertension
- Decreased kidney function
- Reproductive problems (in both men and women)

Lead is tested by a finger stick blood test and is covered by most insurance companies

EBL or Elevated Blood Level = 5ug/dl

Lead Poisoning = 20ug/dl or two tests at 15-19ug/dl (as of April 01 HUD lowered it to 10ug/dl)

Although the effects of lead poisoning are not reversible a procedure known as Chelation is administered on a child with EBL of 45ug/dl or higher. Chelation is a medical technique used to remove heavy metals from the body but also removes vitamins and vital nutrients. This can be a problem among children because they require adequate levels of nutrients for normal growth and development. It is also said to be very painful.