

LEAD: KNOW THE FACTS

Lead is a harmful metal that can be dangerous to young children. Lead was used in wall paints and water pipes in old homes and schools. Dust that forms on lead paint can be harmful for everyone but especially for young children (ages 0-4). Lead and any dust on its surfaces can be inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. Dust from lead paint is the number one source of lead poisoning in children in New York City.¹

In July 2019, the NYC Department of Education tested for lead paint in over 8,000 elementary school classrooms. Lead paint was found in almost 2,000 classrooms. There is no safe level of exposure to lead. High lead levels can cause serious health problems including anemia, hearing and speech problems, and damage to the brain.

WARNING SIGNS

It can be hard to know if your child has lead poisoning. Children usually do not look or feel sick. The only sure way to know is to get a **lead test** at the doctor. Possible symptoms in young children include:

- Feeling very tired
- Irritability
- Aggressive or rough behavior
- Trouble learning
- Delays in reaching developmental milestones
- Trouble sleeping
- Not feeling hungry
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Stomach pain
- Constipation

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Children should be checked by a doctor if they were exposed to lead. Your child's doctor can help determine if your child has lead poisoning. A **lead test** will help doctors know if there is lead in your child's blood. The test will also tell doctors know how much lead is in your child's blood. The doctor will draw blood from the finger or a vein and the results will be ready in a few days.

If your child has high levels of lead in their blood, the doctor will help you with a treatment plan. This could include changing your child's diet, getting rid of lead sources in your child's environment, and sometimes medication. Your child will be retested often to make sure their lead levels are going down.

¹ "Lead Poisoning is a Danger for Every Baby and Child. Here's"
<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2594/>. Accessed 10 Sep. 2019.