

PREGNANT OR PLANNING FOR A BABY?

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME

Lead poisoning can cause lifelong challenges with learning, behavior, and hearing. It can cause language and speech delays and impact academic success in school.



As a pregnant person or new parent, there are steps you can take to keep your child healthy and your home safe from lead. In Maine, lead paint and dust are very common in buildings built before 1978. Follow the guidance below to protect your family.

- Order a free lead dust test kit
- Renovate safely
- Get your child tested at 1 and 2 years
- Wash hands and surfaces



LEAD RISKS

Lead is a serious poison that is harmful even in very small amounts. It is most dangerous to a small child or to a developing baby during pregnancy because their brains and bodies are still developing, and can absorb lead quickly. Lead exposure may also cause high blood pressure during pregnancy, miscarriage, or low birth weight. **The best treatment for lead poisoning is prevention.**



SOURCES OF LEAD

Lead paint in homes is the most common source of lead poisoning. If you are exposed while pregnant or nursing your baby, lead can be passed along to your developing baby. Small children are commonly exposed to lead by breathing in dust or putting things in their mouths. Less often, you and your baby may be exposed by drinking water from lead pipes, or from dust brought home from work.

PREVENT AND TREAT LEAD EXPOSURE EARLY: 4 STEPS



1. Test your home for lead dust before becoming pregnant, or as soon as you know: Order a free dust test kit today to be mailed to your home. Assume any home built before 1978 has lead paint dust on surfaces and in the soil surrounding the house.



2. Renovate safely: Whether you rent or own your home, you have options if you discover lead. Renovation activities like sanding can create hazardous lead dust, so make sure to conduct renovations in a lead-safe way. If you are already pregnant or have young children, consider delaying renovations, or staying out of the room while they happen. Any renovations should be done by a contractor certified in RRP (Renovation, Repair, and Painting). They are professionals trained to protect your family from exposure while they safely remove the lead hazard. Visit this link to find more tips on safe renovations. <https://bit.ly/4mopfdX>



3. Take your child to their doctor for blood lead testing at ages 1 and 2: The only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is to test. In Maine, your child's doctor is required to test for lead at 1 and 2 years. The cost can be covered by insurance plans or funds available from Maine CDC.



4. Wash hands and surfaces, and maintain paint: Make sure you and your family wash their hands frequently, especially before eating. Wash toys, floors, and all surfaces weekly with a wet cloth. Do not let your family eat or put things that have fallen on the floor in their mouths. Inspect window sills, stairs and other surfaces that rub together for chipping, flaking, peeling, or chalking. Remember to report any chipping and peeling paint that you identify to your landlord. Remove debris and paint over those areas.



ONE FAMILY'S STORY:

Jaime and Kyle were excited to have found their dream home in Augusta near family and work. While looking over the purchase documents, they saw that their house was built in the early 1970s, which meant it was likely to have lead paint. They decided to pass on the lead inspection at the time of sale but kept the information about the risks of lead.

Now that Jaime is pregnant, they want to be sure there is no lead. They filled out the online order form for a free test kit from Maine CDC. When the kit arrived in the mail, they followed the instructions to swipe three areas of their home, and sent the samples back for testing. About two weeks later, they got the results in the mail - lead dust was detected in their kitchen. The couple scheduled a time for the lead team from Maine CDC to help them identify the sources of lead. The Maine CDC team guided them on how to safely remove the lead while they are pregnant. Jamie and Kyle feel that their future baby can now thrive in a healthy home.

maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/

207-287-4311 or 866-292-3474

