



## Nutrition Plays an Important Role!

Provide your child with 3 well-balanced meals and 2-3 healthy snacks every day. Children who are well fed absorb less lead than children who are poorly nourished. Focus on the following:

- Iron-rich foods help keep a child's body from absorbing lead. Serve your child foods containing iron such as red meats, dried beans and peas, green leafy vegetables, iron-fortified cereals, and fish like tuna or salmon 2 times per day.
- Calcium helps reduce lead absorption and makes your child's teeth and bones strong. Serve your child foods containing calcium such as milk, cheese, yogurt, and broccoli at least 3 times per day.
- Vitamin C helps absorb iron, which reduces lead absorption. Serve your child foods rich in Vitamin C such as oranges, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, kale, strawberries, cantaloupe, and kiwi at least once per day.

## What Can I do if I am Concerned?

Discuss concerns with your child's Primary Care Physician. The Wisconsin Childhood Lead Poisoning and Prevention Program recommends that children at risk for lead poisoning be screened at 12 and 24 months of age. An "at risk" child includes any of the following criteria:

- Lives in or visits a house built before 1950.
- Lives in or visits a house built before 1978 that has had recent or ongoing renovations or repairs.
- Has a sibling or playmate who has been diagnosed with lead poisoning.
- Receives BadgerCare

**Contact the Columbia County- Division of Health for questions regarding lead poisoning or for more information.**

The mission of Columbia County Health and Human Service is to promote and protect the health and safety of our community.

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111 East Mullett St  
Portage, WI 53901  
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PREVENT•PROTECT•PROMOTE

## Protecting Your Child from Lead Exposure

Columbia County  
Public Health





## Why Should You Worry About Lead?

Exposure to lead may not seem like a big deal, but the reality is that lead exposure can cause serious health effects in your child, some of which are long-lasting:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Delayed growth and development
- Learning and/or behavioral problems
- Hearing and speech problems
- Decreased attention span
- Underperformance in school

Catching lead exposure and/or lead poisoning early can reduce the damage to a child's health. Lead exposure can be prevented!

## What are Sources of Lead Exposure?

### Lead-Based Paint

Houses built before 1978 are likely to have lead in older layers of paint or in varnish. This can be a danger if the paint is chipping, peeling, cracking, chalking, or disrupted during renovation. Lead-based paint and varnish may be found on walls, woodwork, windows, and floors. Areas of friction like painted windows and doors may create lead dust that can get on children's hands and toys and can be swallowed.

### Plumbing

Lead can also be in the water you drink and the water you use to prepare food. Homes built before 1986 are more likely to have lead piping. Lead pipes can be corroded by water and release lead into the drinking water.

### Other Sources

Lead has been found in soil, jewelry, hobby paint, toys, pottery, and imported candy and spices. Individuals in occupations such as welding, battery manufacturing, and demolition may be exposed to lead and bring lead dust home on clothing. Additionally, traditional products like kohl, kajal, surma, greta and azarcon often contain high levels of lead.



## What Can You Do?

There are a number of things you can do to help protect your child. These include:

- Keeping children away from areas of your home where paint is chipping or peeling and preventing them from eating paint chips or chewing on painted surfaces.
- Keep your home clean and dust-free:
  - Mop floors often and use a wet towel to wipe down windowsills and other surfaces regularly.
  - Do not dry sweep as this can move lead dust into the air where it can be inhaled.
  - Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Wash your child's hands often, especially after playing outside and before eating or sleeping.
- Wash your child's toys with soap and water often.
- Be cautious when renovating your home as some repairs like sanding and scraping can create lead dust in the environment, especially in homes built before 1978.
- Work with a lead-certified contractor for home renovations and repairs. These contractors are specially trained to remove lead safely.