

Pregnancy and Lead

Stay healthy during pregnancy for your baby's sake... and yours

Information for communities near waste sites with possible lead contamination

Lead can get into your body in many ways

Living near a site with lead contamination might put you at greater risk of swallowing or breathing in dirt or dust that contains lead. If you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about getting your blood tested for lead. The lead in your blood can pass into your baby's body and cause the baby to have health problems.

Follow these easy steps to lower your exposure to lead and protect your unborn baby

Keep lead out of your food

- Wash your hands and countertops before you prepare food.
- Wash your hands before you eat or serve food.
- Wash vegetables before cooking or eating them raw.

Cook, serve, and store food in lead-free containers

- Avoid using glazed pottery for cooking, serving, or storing food unless it is labeled "lead-free."
- Do not cook, serve, or store food in pottery or ceramics that contain lead.

Eat foods that might help your body absorb less lead

- Foods high in iron
 - Lean red meats, fish, chicken, shellfish, and organ meats (e.g., liver)
 - Cereals high in iron and seeds (pumpkin seeds, quinoa)
 - Dried fruits, such as raisins or prunes
 - Spinach and legumes
- Foods high in calcium
 - Milk, yogurt, cheese, and other dairy products
 - Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale, rhubarb, collard greens, etc.)
 - Legumes (beans, lentils, edamame, chickpeas, etc.)
 - Sardines, salmon, etc.
- Foods high in vitamin C
 - Strawberries, kiwifruit, oranges, orange juice, grapefruits, grapefruit juice, and black currants
 - Tomatoes and tomato juice
 - Green peppers, broccoli, brussels sprouts, snow peas, and kale

Graphic to show the suggested behavior – so maybe a pregnant woman washing hands or washing veggies.

Keep lead out of your water

- Use only clean cold tap water for drinking, cooking, and for making baby formula.
- Hot water from the faucet is more likely to contain lead.
- Run cold water 30 to 60 seconds before using to flush out impurities that might have gotten into the water from plumbing materials.
- Have your water tested for lead (for more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources/water.htm>).

Avoid products that might contain lead

- Lead is sometimes found in certain foods, cosmetics, and traditional medicines imported from other countries (for more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/sources/foods-cosmetics-medicines.htm>).

Clean your home weekly to keep it as dust-free as possible

- Clean floors, windowsills, doorframes, and baseboards with soap and water.
- Place washable doormats or rugs at all entries to the home. Wash them separately from other laundry.
- Make sure that paint in your home remains in good condition—not chipping or peeling.
- Wipe feet before entering the house. Leave shoes at the door so dirt and dust that might contain lead will not be tracked into the house.

This factsheet is provided by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry—Region (insert region number). If you have questions about lead exposure, contact your local health agency (if provided at a specific site of concern, insert name and contact information for the local health agency contact person or office), or call or email (insert name) with Region (insert region number, ATSDR office location, telephone number, and email address of ATSDR contact person). Also, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/prevention/pregnant.htm> for more information.

