

Lead

What to Do if Your Child's Lead Level is High

Blood Lead Test Level	Result	What does this mean for my child?	When to Retest
<3.5 µg/dL	Normal	Be aware of potential risk factors around your home and environment to avoid exposure to lead.	Routine testing at 12, 24 months
3.5-9 µg/dL	Above goal	Identify possible sources of lead in your child's environment to prevent any further exposure.	3 months
10-19 µg/dL	High	Identify possible sources of lead in your child's environment to prevent any further exposure.	1 months
20-44 µg/dL	Very High	Further testing. Home inspection. Consider developmental & nutrition referrals.	2 weeks
≥45 µg/dL	Extremely High	Your child may need to be hospitalized to receive medication.	within 48 hours

Why is lead dangerous?

Lead can harm your child's brain and body. It can cause learning problems, behavior issues, and make them feel sick.

How do children get exposed to lead?

Young children often put things in their mouths. While lead is naturally found in the environment, concentrated sources pose risks.

- **Old Paint:** Homes built before 1978 may have lead paint.
- **Soil:** Lead can be in the dirt around your home.
- **Water:** Pipes installed before 1986 may contain lead.
- **Toys and Jewelry:** Some toys, jewelry, and antiques may contain lead.
- **Imported Items:** Some imported pottery, cosmetics, candies, and spices may contain lead.
- **Adults who work with lead:** Some jobs and hobbies expose family members to lead.

What should I do if my child's lead level is high?

1. **Find the Source:** Try to identify where the lead is coming from. [Risk map](#)
2. **Clean Your Home:** Wet-mop floors and wipe surfaces to reduce dust.
3. **Wash Hands and Toys:** Keep your child's hands and toys clean.
4. **Healthy Diet:** Feed your child food that is high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C. It is safest to avoid processed food. [Baby Food Tip Sheet](#)

Preventing Lead Poisoning

- **Check Your Home:** If your home was built before 1978, get it checked for lead.
 - Test your soil: [WA Dept. of Ecology](#)
- **Reduce Exposure in Water:** Flush pipes and use cold water for drinking/cooking.
 - Test your pipes: [Quick Lead Check | EPA](#)
- **Avoid Certain Items:** Be cautious with imported pottery, cosmetics, and spices.

Important Resources

- **Home Evaluation:** If your child has a very high lead level, you can email lead@doh.wa.gov to see if a case manager can offer a [site visit](#). *Public health funding is limited, so not all families will qualify.*
- **Education about Lead:** www.epa.gov/lead or contact the Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit at pehsu@aap.org
- **Development:** If any concerns, your child should be evaluated by a [Birth to Three](#) team.
- **Nutrition Support:** If you want individualized support, ask for a referral to your insurance so you can schedule with Seattle Children's nutrition clinic at (206) 987-2613.
 - If your family is eligible, apply for [WIC](#) benefits.