

## Food and good nutrition

### Where is lead found?

- Lead is most often found in paint chips from houses built before 1978. Any old home built before 1978 most likely has lead paint.
- In older neighborhoods, small amounts of lead may also be found in tap water from lead pipes.
- Certain types of dishware, make up, and candy made outside of the United States can contain lead.
- People working in some professions can bring lead dust into the home. This may include those who work on a gun range, with car batteries, in radiator shops or remodeling old homes.
- Any home within a mile of a foundry may have elevated levels of lead in the soil.



### Why is lead poisoning dangerous?

Lead poisoning can cause sleep, learning and behavior problems in children. High levels of lead can cause serious damage and disability.

### What can I do to reduce my child's risk for lead poisoning?

- Contact your doctor, WIC Clinic or Health Department to be tested for lead exposure.
- Use wet paper towels to clean up lead dust, especially in homes built before 1978. Regularly clean floors, windowsills and play areas.
- Change your clothes before returning home if your job puts you in contact with lead. Be sure to leave your shoes outside or wipe them thoroughly before walking through the door.
- If you live in an older neighborhood, you may have some lead pipes bringing water into your home. You can find out by asking your landlord or city water supplier. Most homes with lead pipes have the pipes coated with a material that reduces the lead in the water. If your water tests positive for lead or if you have a baby using infant formula, purchase a NSF/ANSI 53 water filter that is certified to remove lead from water. Replace the cartridges regularly per the package instructions.
- Build up your child's resistance to lead poisoning with good nutrition and safe food preparation using the tips below.

### Tips for preparing food safely

- Boiling water does not remove lead. Wash, cook foods and prepare infant formula with bottled water or **cold** water filtered by an NSF-certified filter to remove lead. If you do not have access to bottled water or this specific filter, let the **cold** water tap run for at least 2 minutes between each use.
- Do not cook food or prepare infant formula using **hot tap water**.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before eating or preparing foods. Encourage your child to do the same!
- Children are at higher risk because they often eat with their hands and put things in their mouth. Wash off all bottles, utensils, pacifiers, toys or foods that fall on the floor before giving them back to your child.

## Why is it important to make good food choices?

The food that your child eats can make a difference in how much lead gets into your child's blood. Choose foods that help protect your child from lead poisoning. Serve as many fresh and frozen foods as you can. Focus on serving foods that are good sources of **iron**, **calcium**, and **vitamin C**.

### Good sources of iron:

- Animal-proteins such as chicken, turkey, lean beef and pork, liver, tuna fish.
- Plant-proteins such as cooked dried beans or peas, baked beans, chili, lima beans, butter beans, black-eyed peas. Cereals, breads and other grains labeled as "iron-fortified".
- Baked potato with skin or boiled potatoes.
- Greens and spinach.
- Raisins, sunflower or pumpkin seeds.
- Whole wheat or enriched breads.



### Foods high in calcium:

- Milk, cheese, yogurt.
- Low-fat ice cream, frozen yogurt.
- Dark leafy greens like collards, spinach and kale.

### Foods high in vitamin C:

- Oranges, grapefruit, tangerines, strawberries, cantaloupe.
- Tomatoes, bell peppers, greens, kale and broccoli.
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes baked in their skins.
- Juices – orange, grapefruit, and pineapple. Limit juice to 4 ounces per day.

### Other recommendations

- Add a food with vitamin C to each meal and snack to help your body absorb more iron. If your doctor prescribes iron medicine for your child, mix it with a little bit of orange juice or another juice with vitamin C. Cooking foods in iron pots and pans can help add iron to your child's diet.
- Do not serve hot or iced tea during a meal. These beverages can reduce the amount of iron your body absorbs.
- A child with an empty stomach will absorb more lead. Offer healthy, balanced meals and snacks regularly each day.
- For more information on lead resources and how to get water filters, go to <https://city.milwaukee.gov/LeadSafeMKE>.
- Information in Spanish available at <https://city.milwaukee.gov/leadsafemke-espanol>

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up**