



let's be lead free!

a guide to nutrition and lead poisoning prevention

What is lead poisoning? Lead is a metal found in many things around us, including lead-based paint, dust, soil, water, and lead-glazed pottery. You can eat, drink or breathe in lead. When too much lead gets into your body, it is called lead poisoning. Lead poisoning can cause learning, hearing, and behavioral problems, and can harm your child's brain, kidneys, and other organs. Lead is even harmful to unborn babies. These problems can be permanent. In some extreme cases, it can cause death.

Prepare foods safely

- Wash your hands and your baby's or child's hands with soap before preparing and eating food.
- Wash spoons, forks, bottles and pacifiers that have fallen to the floor or ground before using them again. Throw away any food that has fallen to the floor or ground.
- Use **cold** tap water for preparing and cooking all food. Let the cold water run for 2 minutes if you have not used it for 5 or more hours.
- Store foods or drinks in plastic or glass containers.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables with cold water. Scrub root vegetables, like carrots, potatoes and beets, with a brush and cold water.
- Do **not** heat food in the can.
- Do **not** use these things to hold food or liquid: glazed ceramic pottery made outside the USA or made for decoration, leaded crystal, or antique pewter.
- Do not use folk remedies like azarcon, greta, pay-loo-ah, and litargirio.

Make healthy food choices

- Eat a variety of foods every day.
- Eat meals on time—don't skip meals. Eat healthy snacks between meals. Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with food in their stomachs.
- Eat foods high in **iron, calcium** and **vitamin C** every day. These healthy foods make it harder for your body to absorb lead. Calcium also helps make teeth and bones strong.

Good sources of iron are:

- lean meat and liver
- chicken and turkey
- clams and shrimp
- dry beans and peas
- iron-fortified cereals
- potato with the skin

Good sources of vitamin C are:

- oranges, orange juice, grapefruits, grapefruit juice, tomatoes, tomato juice, and green peppers

Best sources of calcium are:

- milk and milk products such as cheese, yogurt, and pudding

Fair sources of calcium are:

- canned salmon or sardines with bones
- greens like collards, kale, mustard, and turnip greens
- broccoli
- tofu with added calcium (check food label)

Do not take calcium pills made from bone meal or dolomite. These pills may contain lead.

Breastfeed your baby

- Breastfeeding your baby lowers the chance of your baby getting lead poisoning.
- Babies who are not breastfed should be fed iron-fortified infant formula (artificial baby milk). Prepare the formula as instructed on the can and as instructed by your baby's doctor. To reduce the amount of lead in the formula:
 1. Use cold tap water when preparing formula. Let the cold water run for 2 minutes before using it. Do not use hot tap water.
 2. Put the cold water in a pan and cover with a lid. Bring the water to a bubbly boil, boil it for no more than 1 to 2 minutes, and then remove it from the heat and allow it to cool. Keep the lid on until the water cools. Do not boil the same water over again.
 3. Store the prepared formula in a clean glass or hard plastic bottle.

To find out more about preventing lead poisoning, contact the Statewide Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (850) 245-4299 or call your county health department.



Florida Department of Health, WIC Program
www.floridawic.org
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

