

Health Effects from Lead Exposure

There are two types of lead exposure:

Chronic - exposure that continues or recurs over a long time period (3 months or more).

Acute - A single exposure that causes severe harm or even death.

How does lead exposure affect the body?

When its introduced to the bloodstream it disrupts it's ability to deliver oxygen, nutrients and hormones. This disruption affects adults and children differently:

Children

Adults

Growth

Hypertension

Hearing

Iron deficiency

Lower IQ

Hearing loss

Behavioral Changes

Infertility (men)

Iron deficiency/Anemia

Kidney Damage

Nervous System Damage

Behavior Changes

Colic

Anemia

Death

Nervous System Damage

Adverse health effects from lead exposure:

Children under 18 : **5** micrograms per deciliter

Adults 18 and over : **10** micrograms per deciliter

There is no safe level of lead.



(208) 783-0707

35 Wildcat Way
Suite A

Kellogg, ID 83850

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

There is no safe level of lead in the blood.

How do I know if I or my family has been exposed to lead?

The only way to confirm exposure is with a blood test. Contact your family doctor or call Panhandle Health District. If you live, work or recreate within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site, you qualify for a free Blood Lead Level (BLL) test.

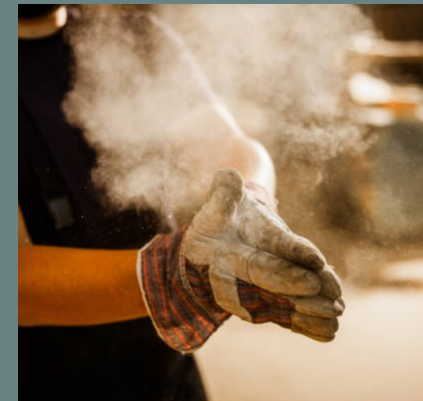
With a simple finger prick, the results can be given within minutes. Depending on the test reading, the test may need to be confirmed by drawing blood from a vein.

What if the test shows I have high blood lead?

Depending on the level of lead, the response can vary. First, the health district will try to determine where the exposure is coming from. The most effective way is to visit your home and use a machine to detect where lead is present. The most important step is to end the exposure immediately. Blood lead levels will drop after about 30 days if the exposure is eliminated.

If the blood lead level is dangerously high, the first step is to eliminate the exposure source then talk with physicians about therapy options.

Lead Exposure at Work



How Lead Exposure Can Happen

Breathing in lead fumes or lead dust.

Lead fumes are produced during metal processing and when metal is heated or soldered. Lead dust is produced when metal is being cut or when lead paint is sanded or removed with a heat gun. Lead dust is also produced from disturbing soil and rock that contain lead.

How to protect yourself:

- Make sure area is well ventilated.
- Wear proper personal protective equipment, such as gloves, mask, respirator or Tyvek suit if necessary.
- Always use water or sweeping compound to minimize dust.

Ingesting lead dust.

Lead dust can settle on food, water, clothes, and other objects. If you eat, drink, or smoke in areas where lead is being processed or stored, you can ingest lead dust. Not washing your hands before you eat or touching your mouth are also ways you can ingest lead.

How to protect yourself:

- Eat and/or drink in areas where lead-containing products are not being handled or processed. Clean surface areas often with a wet rag and mop.
- Wash hands often.
- Avoid touching food or placing anything else in your mouth without first washing your hands. Smoking and chewing tobacco are common ways lead is ingested.

Coming in contact with lead dust.

Lead dust can also get on your clothes, shoes, hair and personal items. If this happens, it's possible that you may track home some of the lead dust, which may also expose your family.

How to protect yourself:

- Always shower if possible. Leave your clothing and shoes at the job site. Try not to enter your car or home in work clothing. Launder* these items often and separately from your family's clothing. *Laundromats typically have designated washing machines and dryers for industrial use.
- Clean your automobile often.
- Pay special attention to items brought into the house like lunch boxes, tools, etc. Create a designated area that is easily cleaned, separate from the main living space.

Common occupations where lead dust or fumes may be present:

Painting (sanding)

Automotive

Excavation

Mining

Plumbing

Demolition

Milling

Bullet manufacturing

Welding