

News Your Customer Can Use

by

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Lead in Residential Dwellings

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Is there lead paint in my home?

Homes built before 1978 could have lead based paint, and homes built before 1950 are even more likely to have interiors painted with lead based paint. Federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renting or buying a pre-1978 house .

Sellers must disclose known information on lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards before selling a house. Sales contracts must include a disclosure form about lead-based paint. Buyers have up to 10 days to check for lead hazards.

How can I test for lead based paints?

Typically a painted surface in an area that has never had any of the various coats removed would be an ideal place to test. A good area is trim paint inside a closet. Scratch on an angle through to bare wood, exposing the multiple coats of paint applied over the years. The area is then rubbed with a testing swab and changes in color are noted indicating if lead is present. Other more involved testing methods can also be employed. Most testing methods and removal procedures require a Florida licensed individual.

To whom and why is lead paint a danger?

Anyone can be lead poisoned. Young children, between the ages of nine months and six years of age are at the highest risk. Effects include;

- Decreased intelligence/ability to learn.
- Increased behavior problems.
- Increased childhood health problems, such as anemia, speech and language delays, hearing problems, kidney damage, seizure, and in rare cases of extremely high levels, even death.
- Decreased school performance.
- Increased juvenile delinquency.
- Decreased health and economic status of the future adult population.

There are often no signs or symptoms of lead poisoning. Sometimes children feel sick to their stomachs, tired or irritable. A simple blood test is the only way to tell if your child is being affected by lead.



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How is lead paint a danger?

Lead is taken into the body through breathing the vapors and eating the dried paint itself. If improperly maintained all paints can chip, flake, and dust into the air. Children will pick up things and put them in their mouths, and crawl on their hands putting them in their mouths. They will explore areas which may be dusty and crawl in the dirt outside. They can also chew on old toys that may have lead paint.



Do I have to remove lead paint from my home?

Properly maintained paint in a clean home is typically of little concern. The odds are that lead paint in your home has been coated over with a lead free paint unless the home is aged and in disrepair. If you are attempting renovation projects such as stripping wood trim and doors to their natural surface and the presence of lead paint is suspected, proper precautions and removal methods should be used. Professionals should be contacted if considering removal of large amounts of lead paint.

What are other sources of lead in my home?

Lead can be introduced by antique furniture or toys, it can be brought in on your body from external work environments, it can be found in the ground around older houses from paint chips. It can also be found in drinking water from lead based solder in older pipes.

How can I minimize the risks of exposure to lead?

- Prevent your children from chewing on house trim finishes and eating paint chips.
- Clean up paint chips and dust with a wet mop or a wet cloth.
- Cover chipped paint and holes with contact paper, duct tape, or cardboard.
- Clean floors and inside windowsills with soap and cloths or paper towels. Then rinse the areas well with clean water and throw out the cloths or paper towels. Wash your children's hands often, especially before meals, naps, and bedtime.
- Empty stomachs will absorb more lead. Feed your children a diet high in calcium, vitamin C, iron, and low in fat. Foods high in fat, such as potato chips, can make it easier for the body to absorb lead.
- Flush tap water every morning for 3 minutes before you use it.
- Breastfeed your baby. Even if you have been exposed to lead, it is usually ok to breastfeed.
- Discuss your concerns with your doctor.



For more information check:

Florida's FAQ's about children and lead

<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/lead/faq.htm>

EPA's "Protecting children from lead"

<http://www.epa.gov/lead/index.html>

