



Lead poisoning continues to be a problem for children, especially children living in or visiting homes built before 1978.

Lead poisoning is a preventable condition.

In Orange County, the greatest factor in childhood lead poisoning has been lead paint and lead dust related to old paint. Lead from surfaces that have been compromised in and around your residence should be a parent's main concern regarding lead poisoning prevention.

If you live in a home built prior to 1978, be sure that all painted surfaces remain intact and free of chipping and peeling paint. Friction surfaces such as windows and doors are often the source of ingested lead paint chips and dust that contains lead. Keep these areas free of debris by washing them with detergent and then damp dusting them as often as necessary. Young children place their fingers and hands in their mouths often throughout the day. This hand to mouth activity after touching toys and household surfaces that may contain lead, is a means of ingesting lead.

A preventative measure for parents is to wash a child's hands several times throughout the day and perhaps make it a game as well as a learning experience. Washing toys on a biweekly or weekly basis, if not more often, also decreases your child's possible exposure. When your child is outside keep their activities located away from the bare dirt closest to the house and on areas covered by grass or a solid non-painted surface. The area closest to the house is more likely to contain lead paint dust and debris from previous work on the house over the years.

It is important to have your child tested for lead poisoning and to be aware of lead hazards around your home and other residences that your child frequents, as well as household items and toys that may contain lead paint. New York State **requires** that all children be tested for lead at ages one and two. A blood lead test is the only way to know if your child has an elevated or lead poisoned blood lead level.

There are not always physical or obvious signs of lead poisoning, which is one reason why getting your children tested for lead is very important. Some signs of lead poisoning may also be symptoms of flu or other illnesses. Symptoms **may** include stomachache and cramps, irritability, fatigue, frequent vomiting, constipation, headache, sleep disorders and/or poor appetite. Studies have

shown that effects of lead poisoning can include damage to the nervous system, growth interference, hearing problems, lower IQ scores, learning disabilities, behavior problems, and at extremely high levels - coma, convulsions and possible death.

If you have any questions regarding lead poisoning, lead testing, lead recalls or would like to receive printed information on lead poisoning, please contact the Orange County Department of Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 845-568-5253 or 845-341-0101 or visit us at:

<http://www.orangecountygov.com/orgmain.asp?storyID=756&orgID=97&storyTypeID=1&sid=>