

# Protect Family and Friends: Stop Take-home Lead Contamination

## What is take-home lead?

You can bring lead dust from work into your home and vehicle on your clothes, boots, skin, hair, and tools. It can enter the blood by breathing it in the air or ingesting it through your mouth. Lead can poison your family and friends.

## What are the health effects of lead in adults?

Lead poisoning may cause tiredness, headache, muscle and joint pain, and changes in mood or appetite. Lead can cause male impotence as well as a reduced sex drive and infertility in both men and women. High blood lead levels may cause damage to the brain, nerves, and kidneys.

## Why is lead bad for women and children?

Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should not be exposed to lead. Even low lead levels in pregnant women can cause miscarriage, premature birth, and permanent harm to unborn babies. In children lead can cause permanent damage to the nervous system resulting in IQ loss as well as behavior, learning, and hearing problems. Children absorb more lead than adults and are at greater risk due to hand to mouth behavior. Children and pregnant women should eat diets high in calcium, iron,

and vitamin C to help reduce the absorption of lead into the body.

## How much lead is considered toxic?

Adults should have no more than 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter (ug/dl) of blood. Young children should have no more than 5 ug/dl of lead in their blood. The lead in your blood can be measured by your doctor.

## Workplaces and jobs with lead exposure:

- Bridge maintenance, painting, and repair
- Ship building, repair, or demolition
- Battery manufacturing
- Indoor firing ranges
- Scrap metal recycling
- Radiator repair
- Stained and specialty glass manufacturing and repair
- Welding or torch cutting painted metal
- Thermal stripping or sanding of paint
- Home renovation/remodeling/demolition
- Lead production, smelting, or soldering
- Brass, copper, or lead foundries
- Lead fishing weight production
- Machining and grinding lead alloy

## Don't bring lead home!

- Shower and wash your hair at work if possible. If showers are unavailable at work, wash your face and hands and then shower as soon as you get home.
- Never wear lead contaminated work clothes in your home or vehicle. Put on clean clothes and shoes before leaving work.
- Keep work clothes separate from street clothes at work, in your vehicle, and in the wash. Lead contaminated clothing should be stored in a plastic bag and should be rinsed an extra time when washed.
- Always follow lead-safe work practices such as wearing personal protective equipment, using ventilation, and HEPA vacuums to clean up lead dust.

Regularly check your home and car for lead. Do-it-yourself lead tests (e.g. 3M™ LeadCheck™ swabs) are available online or at your local hardware store. These tests will tell you if there is lead contamination, but not how much. Heavy, hard to clean, or ongoing contamination should be investigated by a trained lead professional.

## If you think your home or vehicle may be contaminated with lead:

- Have your family tested for lead in their blood.
- Contact a lead removal professional to test your home or vehicle for lead.
- Follow the lead cleaning methods in *How to clean take-home lead from your home and vehicle*.
- Call the SHARP Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology Surveillance (ABLES) program for help at 1-888-667-4277 or the Department of Health Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (CLPP) at 1-800-909-9898.

**Remember! Take-home lead may harm your family, friends, and pets from contact with dust on you or from your work clothing, shoes, and other materials in your car and home.**