

NUTRIFAX[©]

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Lead and Children

Children can be exposed to lead in many ways and this includes lead in the soil, air, dust, drinking water, and paint chips. It is difficult to tell if a child has been exposed to lead and therefore, a child should be tested for lead once a year. Exposure to lead over time can result in lead poisoning. Lead poisoning may cause the following conditions:

- Poor growth
- Poor hearing
- Anemia and lack of energy
- Learning problems
- Mental retardations
- Coma, and in some cases death

Iron rich foods help keep blood healthy. Every red blood cell has a position that can be filled by iron or lead, therefore, a diet rich in iron will block lead absorption.

Foods rich in iron include:

- Beans
- Lean meats, chicken and liver
- Fish (sardines and tuna)
- Fortified cereal, and whole wheat
- Greens (collards, kale, spinach and beet greens)
- Dried fruit (raisins, dates and prunes)

Fatty foods can also cause the body to absorb lead faster.

Low-Fat Diet Tips

- Broil, bake, or boil foods
- Avoid frying
- Buy lean meats and trim fat
- Avoid potato chips, French fries, pastries
- Avoid butter, lard, bacon and salt pork
- Drink low fat milk.

Calcium makes bones and teeth strong. Lead in the blood is deposited in the bone and then stored in there. Calcium covers the lead stored in the bone and inhibits it from returning to the blood and causing lead poisoning. Foods rich in calcium include:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Sardines, canned salmon
- Broccoli, cauliflower
- Green leafy vegetables like kale, turnip greens, mustard greens and spinach.
- Tofu



Protection Tips

- Yearly lead test
- Wash hands before eating
- Watch for peeling paint
- Test your home for lead
- Run tap water for 2 minutes before eating or preparing food
- More lead will be absorbed on an empty stomach

*Food and Nutrition Services
can assist in providing
nutrition information.
Call 703-813-4800 and
ask for a Registered Dietitian.*