

# U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

## WATCH OUT FOR LEAD-BASED PAINT POISONING!

If the home you intend to purchase was built before 1978, it may contain lead based paint. About three out of every four pre-1978 buildings have lead based paint.

### WHAT IS LEAD POISONING?

Lead poisoning means having concentration of lead in the body.

### LEAD CAN:

- cause major health problems, especially in children under 7 years old;
- damage a child's brain, nervous system, kidneys, hearing, or coordination;
- affect learning;
- cause behavior problems, blindness, and even death;
- cause problems in pregnancy and effect a baby's normal development.

### WHO GETS LEAD POISONING?

Anyone can get it, but children under 7 are at the greatest risk, because their bodies are easily damaged.

The risk is worse if the child:

- lives in an older home (built/constructed before 1978, and even more so if the house was built before that;
- does not eat regular meals (an empty stomach accepts lead more easily).
- does not eat enough foods with iron or calcium;
- has parents who work in lead-related jobs;
- has played in the same places as brothers, sisters, and friends who have been diagnosed with lead poisoning;

Women of childbearing age are also at risk, because lead poisoning can cause miscarriages and premature births.

### WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

The lead hazards that children most often touch are lead dust, leaded soil, loose chips, and chewable surfaces painted with lead-based paint. A child may be harmed when it puts toys, pacifiers, or hands that have leaded soil or lead dust on them into their mouths. Lead also comes from:

- moving parts of windows and doors that can make lead dust and chips;
- lead-based paint on windows, doors, wood trim, walls and cabinets in kitchens bathrooms, on porches, stairs, railings, fire escapes and lamp posts;
- soil near the exterior of buildings that have been painted with lead-based paint;
- drinking water (pipes and solder);
- parents who may bring lead dust home from work on skin, clothes, and hair;
- colored newsprint and car batteries;
- highly glazed pottery and cookware from other countries;
- removing old paint when refinishing furniture.

In recent years some users of lead in products that could cause lead poisoning have been reduced or banned. This is true for lead in gasoline, lead in solder used in water pipes, and lead-based paint. Still, a great deal of lead remains in and around older homes.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS AFFECTED?

Is your child:

- cranky
- unable to concentrate
- hyperactive
- unwilling to eat or play
- complaining of stomach aches or headaches
- vomiting
- extremely tired for an unreasonable length in time

These can be signs of lead poisoning. However, your children might not show these signs and yet be poisoned. Only your doctor or clinic can test for sure.

## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

Your child should first be tested for lead in the blood between six months and one year old. Ask the clinic or your doctor to do it during a regular checkup. Your doctor will tell you how often you should have your child tested after that.

## HOW TO KNOW IF MY HOME HAS LEAD-BASED PAINT?

The HUD inspection does not determine whether a home actually has lead-based paint. It only identifies whether there is defected paint in a home that might have lead-based paint. Therefore, the only way you can know for sure is to have the home tested by a qualified firm or laboratory. Both the interior and exterior should be tested.

## WHAT DO I DO IF MY HOME DOES HAVE LEAD?

Do not try to get rid of lead-based paint yourself, you could make things worse for you and your family. If your home contains lead-based paint, contact a company that specializes in lead-based paint abatement. Have professionals do the job correctly and safely. This may cost thousands of dollars, depending on the amount of lead-based paint and lead dust found in your home, but it will also protect you and your family. If your home does have lead-based paint you can take these preventive actions while waiting for abatement:

- keep your child away from paint chips and dust;
- wet-mop floors and wipe down surfaces often, especially where the floors and walls meet. Be sure to clean the space where the window sash rests on the sill. Keeping the floor clear of paint chips, dust and dirt is easy and very important. Do not sweep or vacuum lead-based paint chips or lead dust with an ordinary vacuum cleaner. Lead dust is so fine it will pass through a broom or ordinary vacuum;
- make sure your children wash their hands frequently and always before eating and drinking;
- wash toys, teething rings, and pacifiers frequently.

## WILL HUD INSURE A MORTGAGE LOAN ON A HOME WITH LEAD-BASED PAINT?

HUD may insure a mortgage on a house even with lead-based paint if defective paint surfaces are treated. HUD WILL NOT remove it. You will have to pay the cost of removal yourself.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that I have received and read a copy of this notice before signing the sales contract to purchase my property.

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Borrower:

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Date

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Borrower:

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Date