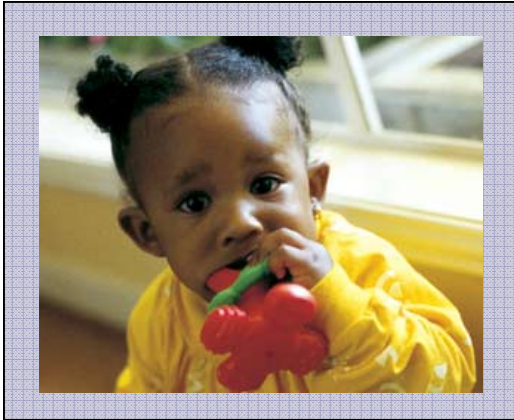


# Facts about Lead



**Lead is a toxic metal that is harmful to human health. Lead has no known value to the human body. The human body cannot tell the difference between lead and calcium, which is a mineral that strengthens the bones. Like calcium, lead remains in the bloodstream and body organs like muscle or brain for a few months. What is not excreted is absorbed into the bones, where it can collect for a lifetime.**

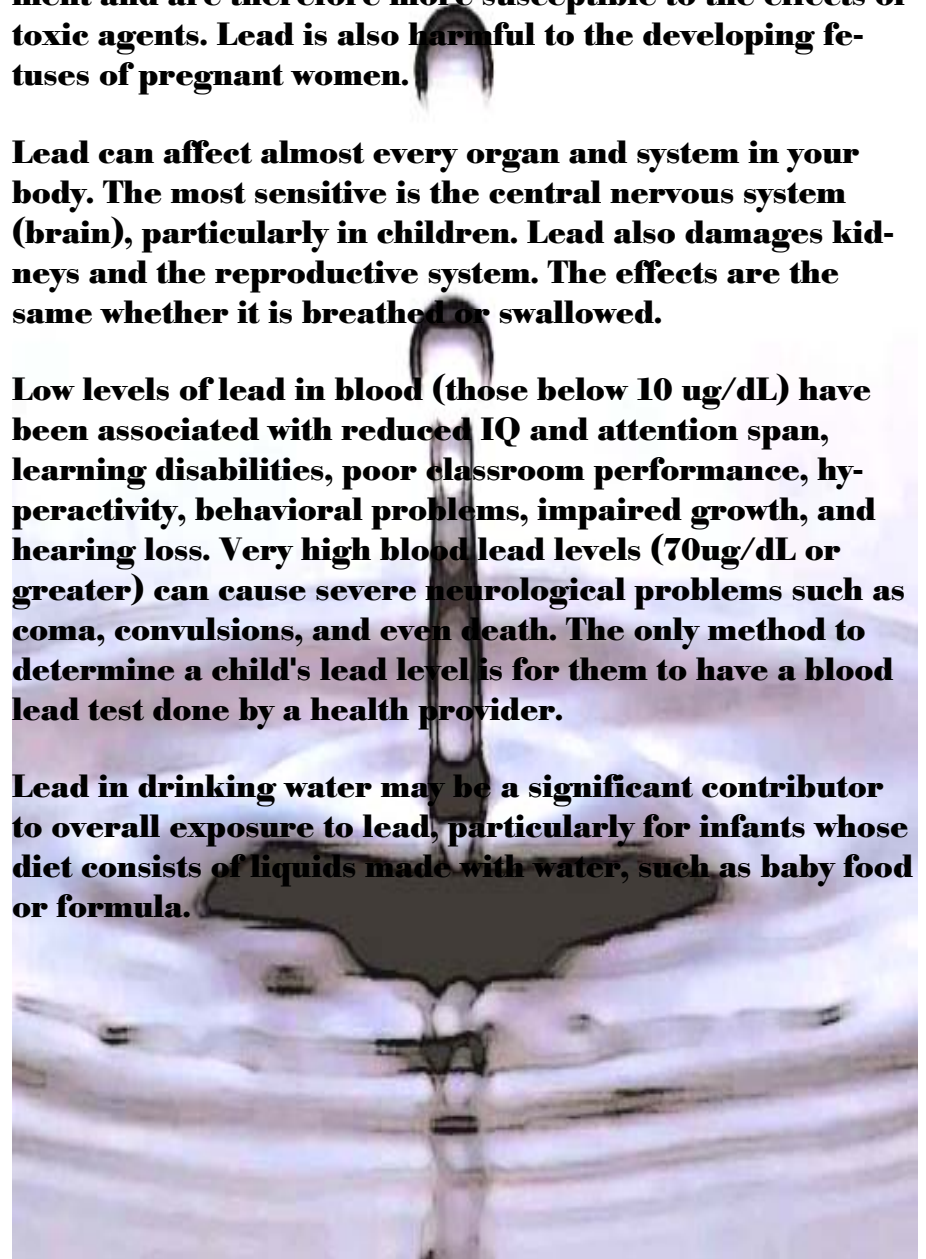
**Young children, those 6 years and younger, are at particular risk for lead exposure because they have frequent hand-to-mouth activity and absorb lead more easily than do adults.**

**Children's nervous systems are still undergoing development and are therefore more susceptible to the effects of toxic agents. Lead is also harmful to the developing fetuses of pregnant women.**

**Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. The most sensitive is the central nervous system (brain), particularly in children. Lead also damages kidneys and the reproductive system. The effects are the same whether it is breathed or swallowed.**

**Low levels of lead in blood (those below 10 ug/dL) have been associated with reduced IQ and attention span, learning disabilities, poor classroom performance, hyperactivity, behavioral problems, impaired growth, and hearing loss. Very high blood lead levels (70ug/dL or greater) can cause severe neurological problems such as coma, convulsions, and even death. The only method to determine a child's lead level is for them to have a blood lead test done by a health provider.**

**Lead in drinking water may be a significant contributor to overall exposure to lead, particularly for infants whose diet consists of liquids made with water, such as baby food or formula.**



## Related Links

For additional information on specific topics visit the websites below:

### Healthy School Environments

#### Healthy School Environments

This EPA web site is designed to provide one-stop access to the many programs and resources available to help prevent and resolve environmental issues in schools.

#### Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools

This Department of Education website offers a collection of links and resources on various school health and safety topics.

### Lead Poisoning Prevention

#### Lead Poison Prevention

EPA's Lead Awareness Program designs outreach activities and educational materials, awards grants, and manages a toll-free hotline to help parents, homeowners, and lead professionals learn what they can do to protect their families, and themselves, from the dangers of lead.

### The Centers for Disease Control Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

The Lead Contamination Control Act of 1988 authorized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to initiate program efforts to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in the United States. Visit this website for information on partnerships, publications, and various other materials addressing lead poison prevention.

### National Lead Information Center (NLIC)

The National Lead Information Center provides the general public and professionals with information about lead hazards and their prevention. NLIC operates under a contract with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with funding from EPA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.



Information compiled by the Environmental Medicine Rotation Program of Morehouse School of Medicine

Source: Environmental Protection Agency—www.epa.gov