Childhood Lead Poisoning

Lead is a heavy metal found in the earth’s crust that does not break down in the environment. When someone inhales or swallows lead, they can suffer serious health consequences, up to and including death.

**CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING**

Childhood lead poisoning is defined by the presence of 5 or more micrograms per deciliter or more of lead within the body. Children **under age 6** are at the **greatest** risk of lead poisoning.

Lead accumulates in the bones

Prenatal exposure can cause **miscarriage**, premature birth, and damage to baby’s brain, kidneys, and nervous system.

In 2018, 109,755 of Georgia’s children were screened for lead poisoning. Of those, **2,333 children** had **lead poisoning**.

All children enrolled in Medicaid or PeachCare for Kids are supposed to be tested for lead poisoning at age 12 months, 24 months, and - if they haven’t yet been tested - between 36 and 72 months. Enrolled children and their families are also offered certain related screening services, like a lead risk assessment questionnaire, at six and nine months of age.

**EFFECTS OF LEAD POISONING**

Children’s bodies absorb lead more easily, affecting brain and other physical development, like in organs and the nervous system. Even low levels of lead can result in:

- Speech, language, and behavioral problems
- Lower IQ
- Learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder
- Nervous system damage

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Higher levels of lead - also called elevated blood lead levels - can cause coma, convulsions, mental retardation, seizures, and death. Elevated blood lead levels can require expensive medical treatment and exacerbate health conditions like asthma.

www.georgiavoices.org
What to Do If Your Child Has Lead Poisoning

1. Make a plan with your child’s doctor.
2. Find the lead in your home using a licensed lead inspector.
3. Clean up lead dust.
4. Eat foods high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C. These vitamins and minerals help keep lead out of the body.

Where is Lead Found?

- **Paint**: Generally, the older the home or child-care facility, the more likely it is to have lead-based paint. While the use of lead in residential paints was banned in 1978, lead is present in many homes and child-care facilities built prior to that date.
- **In herbal or folk remedies**: Greta and azarcon, which are traditional Hispanic medicines, as well as other traditional medicines from India, China, Bhutan and others can contain lead.
- **Certain Mexican candies**: Candies containing tamarind have lead.
- **Small metal objects**: Which can be swallowed by children.
- **Toys**: Those imported from other countries.

Protect Your Family

- **Get your home checked for lead hazards**: Landlords and home sellers are required to provide information on any known lead-based painting hazards in homes built before 1978.
- **Test your water**: Sellers must provide a 10-day period for the buyer to test the home for lead.
- **Remove shoes or wipe off soil before entering house**: Landlords and home sellers are required to provide information on any known lead-based painting hazards in homes built before 1978.
- **Clean regularly**:"