

# Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Yard

Information for communities near waste sites with possible lead contamination

One way lead can get into our bodies is by swallowing or breathing in soil that contains lead. Children can get lead in their bodies when they put their hands, toys, dirt, or other items in their mouths. When lead gets into our bodies, it can cause health problems. Checking your yard and home for lead, and your children's blood-lead levels, can reduce your concern about lead exposures.

## HERE ARE SOME STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO LOWER THE AMOUNT OF LEAD THAT GETS INTO YOUR BODY.

### Do not let children play in dirt that is contaminated with lead

- Have children play on grass or in areas covered with lead-free mulch, wood chips, or sand.
- Keep children from playing in bare dirt.
- Cover bare dirt with grass, bushes, or 4 to 6 inches of lead-free wood chips, mulch, soil, or sand.

### Protect your family from lead-based paint in the yard

- Homes built before 1978 might still have lead-based paint on walls and trim. As paint ages, it can peel and chip away and become part of dust and soil.
- Keep your family, especially young children, away from areas outside your home where old paint might be peeling or chipping away, such as old porches, fences, or houses.
- **Do not** try to remove lead paint yourself unless you have been trained to follow lead-safe work practices. Hire a certified lead specialist who will follow lead-safe work practices. Visit the Environmental Protection Agency's [web page](#) to locate companies that do that work.



### Keep children's hands and toys clean

- Wash children's hands, toys, pacifiers, and dishes frequently.
- Help your children keep their hands and toys away from their mouths. This includes when they are helping in the garden or playing in a sandbox.
- Check for recalls of toys that might have been contaminated with lead. Visit [recalls.gov](https://www.recalls.gov) to search for products that have been recalled.



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Health and Human Services  
Agency for Toxic Substances  
and Disease Registry

## Take other steps to reduce lead exposure

- Remove your shoes and wipe your feet on washable mats before entering your home.
- Wash pets regularly.
- When eating outdoors, try to eat in an area where there is no bare dirt.
- Some studies suggest that avoiding high fat foods such as french fries, hot dogs, and potato chips might help reduce absorption of lead in your body.

This fact sheet is provided by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry—Region 1. If you have questions about lead exposure, contact the Rhode Island Department of Health's Center for Healthy Homes and Environment at 401-222-7796 or [doh.leadprogram@health.ri.gov](mailto:doh.leadprogram@health.ri.gov), or call or email Tarah Somers with Region 1 in Boston at 617-918-1493 or [tv4@cdc.gov](mailto:tv4@cdc.gov).