THE FACTS ABOUT LEAD AND LEAD POISONING

Lead can be found in many places in and around your home. Lead can be in paint, in dust from lead paint, and in water pipes.

When lead gets into the body, it is a poison that harms people. This is called lead poisoning.

Lead poisoning is most dangerous for children younger than six because even a small amount of lead can affect their learning and cause other serious health problems.

You can protect your children from lead poisoning. Giving your children healthy foods is one way to protect them. When children eat the right foods, their bodies absorb less lead.

The only way to know if your child is lead poisoned is to have him or her tested. Talk to your doctor about having your children tested for lead poisoning.

NUTRITION RESOURCES

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, 401-277-5270
Provides nutrition education for adults and youth through small groups and home visits.

WIC, 401-222-5960
Provides nutritious foods to pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, and children under five years old.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE HEALTH INFORMATION LINE AT 401-222-5960 OR VISIT WWW.HEALTH.RI.GOV/LEAD
CHOOSE THE RIGHT FOODS

- Give your children three meals and one or two low-fat snacks a day. When your child’s stomach has some food in it, your child’s body absorbs less lead. Bagels, fruits, vegetables, and graham crackers are good low fat snacks.
- Give your children foods that have a lot of iron. Iron helps protect the body from lead. Meats and fish, such as liver, beef, pork, chicken, tuna, and sardines, have a lot of iron. Lentils, beans, green leafy vegetables, peas, and dried fruit, such as raisins, also have iron. Some cereals have added iron.
- Give your children foods that have a lot of calcium. Milk, cheese, and yogurt have the most calcium. Vegetables, such as spinach, kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens, also have calcium. Some other foods have added calcium, such as orange juice and grapefruit juice.
- Avoid fatty foods. Fat makes your child’s body absorb lead faster. Fatty foods include fried foods, potato chips, pastries, donuts, french fries, hot dogs, and bacon. Choose low fat foods such as fruits, vegetables, and meat without a lot of fat.
- Cut fat off of all meat before you cook it.
- Use less oil, butter, and lard when you cook.

When you cook, try to broil, bake, microwave, steam, or boil food instead of frying food.

The WIC Program provides nutritious foods to pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, and children under five years old. Call the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960 to find out more about WIC and the foods your children need.

PREPARE AND STORE FOOD SAFELY

- Always wash your hands and areas where food is prepared, such as countertops and tables, before making meals.
- Run cold water from the faucet for at least one minute before you drink it or cook with it. Never use hot water from the faucet for drinking or cooking. Hot tap water can have lead in it from the pipes.
- Wash fresh fruit and vegetables with cold water before eating or cooking them.

AVOID LEAD IN YOUR KITCHEN

- Wash dusty areas in your kitchen with a wet mop or wet cloth. Use warm soapy water and rinse often.
- Wash floors and counters often even if you do not see dust.
- Food on the floor can pick up lead dust. Don’t let your children eat food off the floor.
- Wash your children’s hands before they eat.