LEAD *in house paint and dirt can hurt your child!*

■ Does the paint and dirt at my house have lead in it?

If your home was built before 1978 it may have been painted inside and outside with paint that has lead in it. The dirt outside of these homes may also have lead in it.

Have your paint and dirt tested for lead. Call your local Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. They can help you find someone to do these tests.
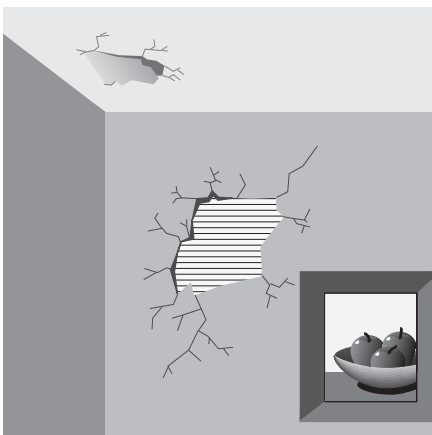
■ How can lead hurt my child?

Lead can harm your child's brain. Lead poisoning can make it hard for your child to learn, pay attention and behave.

■ How do I know if my child has lead poisoning?

The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is for your child to get a blood test for lead. Most children with lead poisoning don't look or act sick.

Young children get lead poisoning more often than older children. Lead is also more harmful to them.

Talk to your child's doctor. Your child may need a blood test for lead poisoning. Most children are tested at 1 and 2 years old. Some children over 2 also need to get tested.

■ How does the lead in paint get spread around my home?

Lead becomes dust and falls onto floors and other surfaces inside, and onto the dirt outside.

Lead dust comes from old paint that is:
- chipped or peeling
- sanded or scraped
- worn down by sun and rain

■ How do children get poisoned from lead in paint, dust and dirt?
- By chewing and sucking on things with lead dust on them, like their hands and toys
- By chewing and sucking on painted surfaces, like window sills
- By breathing in lead dust
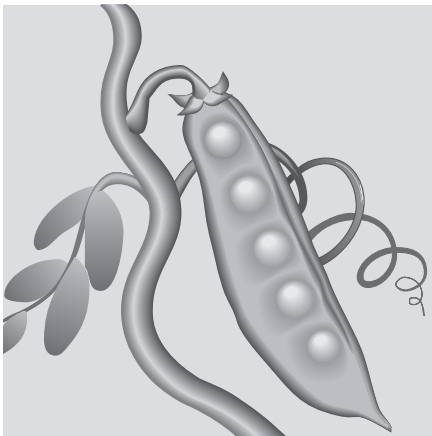- By eating paint chips, dirt or mud

What if I want to paint or remodel my home?

Before you begin, call your local Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. They can tell you the safest ways to work with lead paint and give you information on how to protect your family from lead poisoning.

Never sand, dry scrape, powerwash, peel, or sandblast paint unless it has been tested and you know the paint does not have lead in it.

Can lead in dirt get into the fruits and vegetables in my garden?

Yes. Lead in dirt can get into plants.

How can I garden safely if my dirt has lead in it?

• Plant your garden away from your home. The dirt closest to your home has the most lead in it.

• Grow vegetables in planter boxes, containers, or raised beds filled with store-bought potting soil.

• Add compost and gardener's lime to the dirt regularly. These help keep lead out of your plants.

• Wash or peel fruits and vegetables to remove lead dust.

Have Your Child Tested for Lead Poisoning

A blood lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning.

Talk to your child's doctor or local Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to find out about testing.

If you are pregnant, lead can hurt your baby. Ask your doctor if you should get a blood test for lead.

Free Testing

To find out if your child can get free health care, including a free blood lead test, call 1-888-747-1222. The call is free.

For More Information, Call:

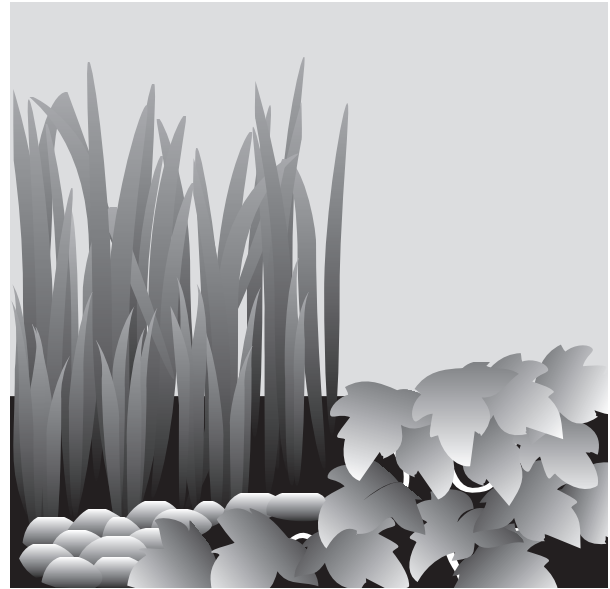# HOW CAN I PROTECT MY CHILD FROM LEAD IN DUST AND DIRT?

- **Keep your home clean and dust-free.** Mop floors, wet wipe window sills, vacuum, and wash all surfaces often.

- **Wash your child's hands and toys often.** Always wash your child's hands before eating and sleeping.

- **Feed your child healthy meals and snacks.** Foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C make it harder for lead to hurt your child.

  Calcium-rich foods include milk, cheese, yogurt, corn tortillas and tofu.

  Iron-rich foods include meat, chicken, iron-fortified cereals, raisins, and spinach and other dark greens.

  Vitamin C-rich foods include oranges and orange juice, grapefruit and grapefruit juice, and tomatoes and tomato juice.

- **Do not let your child chew on painted surfaces or eat paint chips, dirt or mud.**

- **Cover dirt wherever children play.** Plant bushes, grass and other plants, or lay paving stones, concrete, bark or gravel.

Be sure to cover dirt closest to your home, where most lead is found.

- **Take off shoes or wipe them on a doormat** before going in your home.

California Department of Health Services

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION BRANCH