

NC Healthy Homes Solutions



Healthy Homes Highlights

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Lead Paint: Is It In Your Home?

What is lead?

Lead is a naturally-occurring element. Because of its durability, it was used as an additive in paints, plastics, and other household items. Unfortunately, lead is also poisonous to humans and animals. While lead can be found in many places, this issue deals specifically with lead paint.

Why be concerned about older homes?

An estimated 25% to 40% of all U.S. homes contain lead. While lead was banned for use in paint in 1978, many homes built prior to that time may contain lead paint. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that approximately 87% of the homes built before 1940, 69% of the homes built between 1940-1959, and 24% of homes built between 1960-1978 contain lead paint.



How am I exposed to lead paint?

Humans are exposed to lead through ingestion and inhalation. As lead deteriorates, it may flake, chip, or degrade into a fine dust. Children may eat lead paint chips (lead tastes sweet) or chew surfaces such as woodwork painted in lead. This ingestion may result in lead poisoning. More commonly, however, is exposure through inhalation, or breathing in lead dust. As lead paint degrades it turns into a very fine, talc-like dust, and then can be inhaled. Ingestion of lead dust is also possible during hand-to-mouth contact.

What are the dangers associated with lead paint?

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Quick Tips for Lead Poisoning Prevention

- If your home was built before 1978, get it checked by a professional

- Prevent children and pets from chewing on painted surfaces and from ingesting soil, another source of lead

- Do regular checkups throughout your home for any damage done to painted areas

- Provide diets high in iron and calcium to your family; in addition to higher nutrition, less lead is absorbed in the body

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Lead poisoning is a health risk for people of all ages. For adults, health effects include high blood pressure, memory loss, decline in mental functioning, joint and muscle pain, and reproductive issues.

Symptoms of lead poisoning in children include stomachaches, headaches, irritability, and sleep problems. In turn, lead poisoning may cause more severe effects including delayed development, learning and behavior problems, hearing loss, lowered IQ, and damage to organs such as the brain, liver, and kidneys.

How do I know if I have lead paint?

To determine if your house has lead paint, have it tested by a certified lead renovator, lead paint inspector, or lead risk assessor. The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services epidemiology division provides a [searchable database](#) for those looking for lead professionals.

What if my house contains lead paint?

While intact, undamaged lead paint may not be immediately problematic, but once the paint begins to deteriorate, it becomes a health hazard. The best action to take is to have lead paint removed by a [certified lead abatement contractor](#).

How To Check For Lead

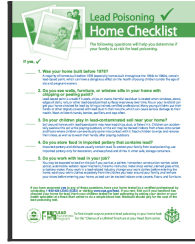
If your home was built prior to 1978, you may want to have your paint tested for lead -- especially if you have young children living in or frequently visiting your home.

The EPA recommends checking for lead in the following ways:

- *A paint inspection – Tells you the lead content of every different type of painted surface in your home but does not tell you if the paint is a hazard or how to deal with it. This is most appropriate when you are buying a home or signing a lease, before you renovate, and to help you determine how to maintain your home for lead safety.*
- *A risk assessment – Tells you if there are any sources of serious lead exposure such as peeling paint and lead dust, and tells you what actions to take to address these hazards. This is most helpful if you want to know if your family is exposed to lead now. (U.S. EPA, 2016)*



In addition to the recommendations above, the EPA has created a [checklist](#) to help you identify whether or not your family is at risk for lead poisoning.



What is the RRP Rule

The Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule requires that all professionals hired for remodeling work in homes or child-occupied facilities constructed prior to 1978 receive training and certification in lead-safe work practices. When hiring a contractor, be certain to verify that the firm is certified.



Unless a homeowner is performing the work him/herself, any project that will disturb 6 square feet or more of lead paint surfaces requires:

- Renovators to be certified through training.
- Firms to be certified.
- Training providers to be accredited for lead-safe work practices during renovations.
- Pre-renovation education in target housing and child-occupied facilities.

Even if a homeowner is doing the work, lead-safe practices should be followed.

To learn more about the rule and for helpful resources on locating certified firms, check out the [U.S. EPA website](#). To help keep your family safe during renovation projects, carefully review EPA's [The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right](#).

Helpful Resources

There are many resources to help you learn a variety of home safety issues. Explore some of the resources below. Your house and your family will appreciate you for it!

Residential Energy Efficiency
[Home Energy Management Website](#)

Radon Prevention
[N.C. Healthy Homes Radon Page](#)



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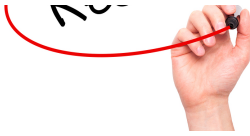
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Lead and Water in the News

While this newsletter issue has focused on lead paint, lead in water has been in the news recently. Flint, Michigan has experienced significant news coverage related to high levels of lead in the water. To learn more about water and lead, visit the [US EPA site on this issue](#).

[N.C. DHHS: Radon Program](#)



Carbon Monoxide

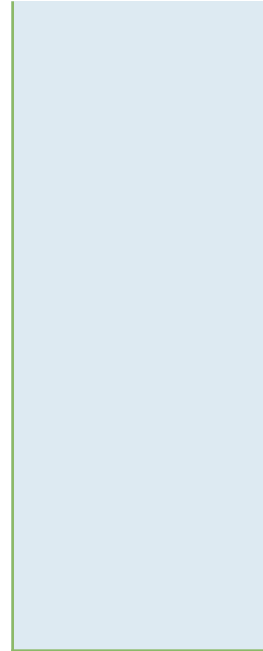
[U.S. CPSC Carbon](#)

[Monoxide Information Center](#)

[NFPA: Carbon Monoxide Safety Tips](#)

Winter Weather

[CDC: Winter Weather Checklist](#)



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