

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM LEAD?

- Contact your doctor about getting a lead test if you believe you have been exposed to lead.
- Eat foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C. This helps keep your body from absorbing lead.
- Avoid using imported traditional medicines, cosmetics, and spices that may contain lead.
- Ensure your dishes and cookware are lead-free.
- Avoid eating non-food items, such as soil, clay, or paint chips.
- Take precautions—or hire an EPA-certified professional—when remodeling a home built before 1978 in order to prevent exposure to lead-based paint dust.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

- Contact your health care provider.
- Visit the Alaska Lead Surveillance Program website:
 - ◇ <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/eph/Pages/lead/default.aspx>
- Call or email the Alaska Environmental Public Health Program:
 - ◇ Phone: 907-269-8000
 - ◇ Email: eph@alaska.gov

LEAD EXPOSURE IN WOMEN OF CHILDBEARING AGE



Protecting yourself from lead poisoning

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Public Health
Environmental Public Health Program



WHAT IS LEAD?

Lead is a heavy metal that occurs naturally in the earth's crust. Lead can be found in the environment and in some homes and workplaces.



WHY SHOULD I BE CONCERNED ABOUT LEAD?

- Lead is highly toxic to humans, especially young children and developing fetuses.
- Lead can be stored in bones and remain in the body for years.
- **If a woman is exposed to lead, it can affect the development of any babies she has, even if the exposure happened years ago.**
- During pregnancy and breastfeeding, lead can be passed to the fetus or to the nursing infant.
- Lead can also damage your cardiovascular, kidney, nervous, and reproductive systems.

HOW COULD I BE EXPOSED TO LEAD?

You could be exposed to lead by:

- Living in, repairing, or remodeling a home built before 1978 (lead-based paints were banned from use in housing in 1978)
- Participating in a hobby where lead is used, such as:
 - ◇ Making stained glass or jewelry with lead solder
 - ◇ Shooting or reloading firearms
 - ◇ Shooting or working at an indoor firing range
 - ◇ Casting lead bullets or fishing weights
 - ◇ Recycling metal
- Ingesting soil that contains lead
- Using, ingesting, or mouthing items that contain lead, such as imported toys and cosmetics
- Eating wild game that has been shot with lead bullets or lead shot (pellets)
- Working in an industry, such as mining, where lead particles or fumes may be in the air
- Having a family member who works in an environment with lead—lead dust can be brought into the home on shoes and clothing

WHAT IMPORTED PRODUCTS COULD CONTAIN LEAD?

- ◆ **Cosmetics** such as kohl, surma, and sindoor
- ◆ **Traditional medicines** such as ayurvedic, greta, azarcon, alarcon, alkohol, bali goli, coral, ghasard, luiga, pay-loo-ah, and rueda
- ◆ **Imported items** such as glazed pottery, candy, nutritional pills or vitamins, and foods canned or packaged outside the U.S.



If you become pregnant and are concerned about past lead exposure affecting your child, talk to your health care provider.