

Fredericktowne Labs, Inc.
3020 Ventrie Ct., P.O. Box 245, Myersville, MD 21773
(301) 293-3340 or (301) 694-7133 FAX (301) 293-2366

**TIPS for HOMEOWNERS #6
LEAD IN PAINT**

1. How great a threat is lead poisoning in the United States?

According to public health officials, lead is the number one environmental threat to children - whether they live in public housing or suburban homes.

2. What is the most prevalent source of lead?

A Newsweek article dated July 15, 1991 cites these statistics:

"74% of all private housing built before 1980 contains some lead paint."

"3 million tons of old lead line the walls and fixtures of 57 million American homes."

3. How does lead poisoning affect children?

Even small doses of lead can slow development and make children less intelligent. Children with high lead levels are six times more likely to have reading disabilities and more likely to be considered hyperactive or aggressively antisocial. Some studies have linked low-level exposure to hearing loss, slower reaction time, reduced attentiveness, delays in the age at which children first walk and problems of balance.

4. How does lead enter a child's body?

Peeling and flaking paint are often ingested by children who chew on painted furniture. Fine paint dust stirred up by sanding or vacuuming during renovation may be inhaled or ingested by the child. Friction from opening and closing windows can turn lead-based paint into lead dust which can then be ingested.

5. Why is lead so toxic?

The body mistakes it for calcium. The lead attaches to and disrupts enzymes essential to the functioning of brain and other cells. Because it is an element, it never decomposes into another, more easily tolerated, substance. While it can be removed from the bloodstream through chelation, most of the lead that is absorbed into a child's brain sits there, literally, forever.

6. What treatment is available for lead poisoning?

A painful treatment called chelation uses injections to cleanse the blood of some lead.

7. What steps have been taken to deal with lead in paint?

Paint manufacturers removed much of the lead from paint in the 1950's, but most of the paint remains in the same houses that got coats forty or more years ago.

PRECAUTIONS:

1. Before buying a house built before 1950, test for lead paint.
2. During renovations: If you have lead-based paint, the safest approach is to send kids elsewhere until work is complete and the house has been thoroughly cleaned.
3. Hazards can be significantly reduced by replacing doors, windows and frames or by putting up wallpaper or paneling.