

# Lead Poisoning Prevention FAQs



## **What is lead?**

- ❖ Lead is a highly toxic metal that occurs naturally in the environment. It has been used for many years in products found in and around our homes.

## **Who does lead harm?**

- ❖ Lead harms everyone, but it is most dangerous for children. This is because their brains are still developing and they absorb more of the lead they ingest. It is also dangerous for pregnant women. If a pregnant woman is exposed to lead it can hurt the unborn child.

## **How is lead bad for you?**

- ❖ In children, lead causes developmental delays and damage to the nervous system. It also causes a lower intelligence quotient (IQ) and attention deficient hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- ❖ In adults, high levels of lead can cause fatigue, memory loss, aches and pains, irritability, and nausea.

## **How are we exposed to lead?**

- ❖ The main source of lead exposure for children is chipping and peeling lead-based paint (used in homes built before 1978). Other exposure sources include soil, drinking water, imported toys, folk remedies, and ceramics.
- ❖ Adults can be exposed through lead-related hobbies or jobs, like construction, battery recycling, metalwork, and at firing ranges.

## **How can I reduce the risk of me or my child being exposed to lead?**

- ❖ Wet-wipe and wet-mop around windowsills and home entrances; wash hands frequently; prevent children from playing in bare soil; run tap water for 60 seconds before cooking with it; cook nutrient dense meals high in iron, calcium and vitamin C.
- ❖ Adults with lead-related work or hobbies should remove shoes before entering the home and immediately change clothes and wash hands after coming home.