

# Pregnancy and Lead: Keeping You and Your Baby Safe

## What is lead?

Lead is a heavy metal found in many places such as in old paint, batteries, and pottery. Some traditional and folk medications can contain high amounts of lead, as well as some types of candy made in Mexico.

## Why is Lead Bad?

High levels of lead in the blood can cause serious health problems to the brain and the kidneys. If you are pregnant and you have a high amount of lead, it is more likely that the baby could die before childbirth, be born too early or too small, or develop learning problems as a child.

## How does lead get into my body?

When lead paint is sanded or disturbed it produces dust. If you breathe in that dust, the lead can get into your lungs. It can also get into your body if you swallow lead paint chips, medications, soil or water that contains lead. When a person is exposed to lead is stored in the bones and can build up throughout a person's life.



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## What can I do to avoid lead?

- If you or someone else in your house works with lead in your job or have a hobby such as jewelry making or stained glass, check your blood lead level.
- Avoid doing things to fix up your home that may disturb paint that contains lead.
- If other people will be fixing up your home for you, be sure that they follow procedures to protect you and your family from lead exposure.
- Eat a well-balanced diet and take prenatal vitamins. Poor nutrition can lead to increased lead absorption.
- Have your water tested for lead and other possible contaminants.

## For more information call your Health Department Lead Program:

**Cayuga County 253-1560**

**Madison County 366-2361**

**Onondaga County 435-3271**

**Oswego County 349-8316**



For more information call REACH CNY at 1-888-295-8662. Funded in part through the NYS Dept. of Health Division of Family Health.

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