



# LEAD

## NO AMOUNT IS SAFE

Lead poisoning occurs in Alaska. Keep yourself and your family safe by preventing exposure and testing if contact occurs.

### Where is lead from?

Lead has been removed from many products, but it occurs naturally and continues to be used in a wide range of items and industries. We're fortunate in Alaska to have mostly newer homes without lead paint or pipes, but we do have many sources of lead exposure including:

- Mining of lead, zinc, silver or gold ore
- Lead paint in homes and buildings (built before 1978)
- Firearms and ammunition
- Shooting ranges
- Consumption of game meat (shot with lead ammunition)
- Fishing weights
- Leaded aviation gas
- Marine paint
- Soldering, welding or craft making
- Pica or mouthing (eating dirt)
- Imported household objects
- Lead or brass pipes/faucets
- Batteries and automobile repair

## **Why is lead such a concern?**

Even very low levels of lead in blood affect brain development. No level is considered safe by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Children under the age of six years and developing fetuses are the most vulnerable because their brains and bodies develop rapidly. Also, young children may touch, mouth or eat objects contaminated with lead dust.

## **When is lead testing warranted?**

Testing for lead is currently recommended for Medicaid recipients (Denali KidCare) at 12 and 24 months. Not many Alaska children are currently being tested for lead. More testing would likely reveal more elevated blood lead levels in children. The CDC and DHSS also recommend testing if you or your family has known exposure to lead.

Ask a health care provider if you have questions or concerns, or call the Alaska Lead Surveillance Program in the Section of Epidemiology, 269-8000.

## **Prevent exposure to keep your family lead-free!**

- If working around lead, remove your work clothes and shower after work to prevent the transfer of lead contamination into your home.
- Consider using non-lead ammunition and fishing weights when hunting or fishing.
- If young children are living in a home built before 1978, have the paint tested. If remodeling an older home, take precautions and follow EPA rules.
- Keep children away from all man-made lead sources such as lead fishing weights, firearms and ammunition, aviation gas, and marine paint.
- Don't let young children near areas known to contain lead, such as workshops where lead is used. Keep these areas well ventilated and clean.
- Don't eat, drink, or smoke while handling lead. Wash your hands thoroughly after touching lead.



**For more information:** [leadfree.dhss.alaska.gov](http://leadfree.dhss.alaska.gov)