



**Protect Your Family From
Lead in Your Home**

The lead paint problem in the United States

Lead is a known poison. Other countries limited the use of lead-based paint as early as 1840. The United States did not act until the 1970's. In 1978, the U.S. Government banned the use of lead-based paint in houses, hospitals, schools, parks, playgrounds, and public buildings. Lead-based paint can still be used on cars, boats, metal furniture, industrial steel, farm equipment, and on roads as traffic paint.

Today about 57 million U.S. homes contain lead-based paint. This number includes houses and apartments in the cities, in suburbs, and in the country. It includes the homes of the rich as well as the homes of the middle class and the poor. Older homes are more likely to have lead-based paint than newer homes.

Renovation in a home where lead-based paint is found is one of the greatest causes of childhood lead poisoning, especially when families occupy the home with children under the age of 6. Children, under the age of 6, are the most likely to be damaged by lead because their nervous systems are still developing. Because so many homes and apartments in the United States were built before the banning of lead-based paint, millions of children in the U.S. are at risk for lead poisoning.

When lead-based paint deteriorates or is disturbed, it creates lead dust. The greatest problem is not paint that is chipping; it is the lead dust that is created. Lead dust can then get onto the floor or in the carpet on which children play. It can even get into the soil outside their homes. The dust can then get on the children when they play on the floor. Children then put their hands and toys into their mouth and the lead dust is swallowed.

The Center for Disease Control has determined that a child has lead poisoning when the Blood Lead Level (BLL) is 20 microgram of lead per deciliter. (20ug/dl). To give you an idea of how much lead this is, a gram = 1/2 penny. A microgram is 1,000,000 of a gram. A deciliter is less than 1/2 cup. So the amount of lead in 1/2 cup of blood would only have to equal 20 particles the size of a 1 million of a 1/2 penny (less than a dust particle) to classify the child with lead poisoning.