

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEAD POISONING

## What causes lead poisoning?

A mother's exposure to lead can cause an elevated blood lead level or lead poisoning in the unborn or nursing child.

In Michigan, lead paint and dust are the main causes of lead exposure. It is found in homes built before 1978; the older the home, the more likely that painted surfaces like windows, cupboards, doors and porches will contain lead paint.

Other sources of exposure include soil, water, and jobs and hobbies using lead such as construction and home renovation, and ammunition or jewelry making. Some pottery glazes, imported spices and home remedies may also contain lead.



## Should I get tested?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends talking to your doctor or local health department to learn more about the risk factors that may indicate the need for blood lead testing.

## If I test positive for lead exposure can I continue to breastfeed?



In most cases, breastfeeding is safe. However, if your blood lead level goes above 40 ug/dl or your level is greater than 20 ug/dl and your baby has a level above 5 ug/dl, you should talk with your doctor about continuing to breastfeed.

## What can I do to protect my child and me from lead?

- Wash hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.
- Always take off shoes before going into the house.
- If you have lead pipes, flush your pipes before drinking, and only use cold water for drinking or mixing formula. Flush pipes by running the water for approximately 5 minutes.
- Watch your diet carefully. Foods high in calcium and iron help keep lead from being absorbed by your body.
- Stay out of the house while disturbing paint or remodeling your pre-1978 home.
- Use a certified Repair and Remodeling Professional when making updates to your pre-1978 home.
- Practice safe cleaning methods.



For more information, visit [www.michigan.gov/lead](http://www.michigan.gov/lead) or call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 517-335-8885.

