



Solano Family & Children's Services, Child Care Food Program

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Nutrition Nuggets

Lead Poisoning



If you have young kids, it's important to find out whether there's any risk that they might be exposed to lead, especially if you live in an older home. Many toys and other products from outside the United States have also been found to contain lead.

Long-term exposure to lead, a naturally occurring metal used in everything from construction materials to batteries, can cause serious health problems, particularly in young kids. Lead is toxic to everyone, but unborn babies and young children are at greatest risk for health problems from lead poisoning — their smaller, growing bodies make them more susceptible to absorbing and retaining lead.

Each year in the United States, 310,000 1- to 5-year-old kids are found to have unsafe levels of lead in their blood, which can lead to a wide range of symptoms, from headaches and stomach pain to behavioral problems and anemia (not enough healthy red blood cells). Lead also can affect a child's developing brain. The good news is that you can protect your family from lead poisoning. Talk to your doctor about potential lead sources in your house or anywhere your kids spend long periods of time, especially if they're younger than 3 years old.

And it's important for kids at risk of exposure to undergo blood tests for lead — many people with lead poisoning show only mild symptoms or even no symptoms at all.

Why Is Lead Harmful? Whether it's inhaled, swallowed, or, more rarely, absorbed through the skin (just by touching a product that contains lead), lead can act as a poison. Exposure to high lead levels in a short period of time is called acute toxicity. Exposure to small amounts of lead over a long period of time is called chronic toxicity.

Lead is particularly dangerous because once it gets into a person's system, it is distributed throughout the body just like helpful minerals such as iron, calcium, and zinc. And lead can cause harm wherever it lands in the body. In the bloodstream, for example, it can damage red blood cells and limit their ability to carry oxygen to the organs and tissues that need it, thus causing anemia.

Most lead ends up in the bone, where it causes even more problems. Lead can interfere with the production of blood cells and the absorption of calcium that bones need to grow healthy and strong. Calcium is essential for strong bones and teeth, muscle contraction, and nerve and blood vessel function.

Here are some suggestions to help prevent lead poisoning:

- Wash floors, windowsills, and other surfaces weekly in structures built before 1978. Use warm water and detergent to remove dust released by old lead paint.
- Clean up flaking paint chips immediately.
- Turn on the water and let it run for one minute each morning before using it. This is a good practice for old buildings that may have lead pipes.
- Prevent children from chewing on old painted surfaces.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, and toys often.
- Wipe the soil off shoes before entering the child care facility or take shoes off.
- Drink or cook only with water that comes out of the tap cold. For more information on lead in tap water, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).
- Feed children balanced, timely meals. Make sure they get enough calcium, zinc, vitamin C, vitamin D, and iron. These nutrients help prevent the absorption of lead that is ingested. Also, a full stomach reduces the amount of lead absorbed by the body.
- Feed children who are two years of age and older less fat. Low-fat yogurt, 1 percent or fat-free milk, string cheese, low-fat cottage cheese, and tofu are lower in fat and rich in calcium, a mineral that helps prevent the absorption of lead.
- Do not store beverages in lead crystal decanters.
- Do not use handmade, imported, or old ceramic mugs or pitchers for hot or acidic beverages. Commercially made U.S. ceramic porcelain and glass dishes or cups are safe.
- Use ceramic dishes or cups that become chalky for decorative purposes only.

For more information on childhood lead poisoning prevention, call your local Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program or your local health department.

From Kids Health, the Nemours Foundation

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Banana Breakfast Smoothie

1 banana, peeled
1/4 cup strawberries, washed and sliced
1/3 cup non-fat milk
8 ounces yogurt

Combine all ingredients in blender, blend until smooth. Counts toward the Meat Alternate and Fruit components for breakfast.

From Fruits and Veggies, More Matters



The Child Care Food Program Review is coming!

Every two years, the Department of Education reviews our program to ensure we are training you correctly and that you understand the program regulations. Along with this administrative review, they will randomly visit a handful of providers. They want to make sure you are aware of all program regulations and that you are following them.

If you are chosen to be visited, don't panic. They are basically checking the same things we do. They will identify themselves (you can check their ID, they carry their CDE Child Nutrition Division ID's). Our staff member may or may not accompany them, each evaluator does it differently.

* Be sure you keep your records current through the previous day. If you do not have them input into KidKare or written on your scan forms, you must have the menu and attendance written and available for them to check. Any missing menus and attendance will be disallowed and could lead to a Serious Deficiency finding.

* Be sure to have your labels available for any foods that need to meet specific requirements. This could be Child Nutrition Labels for Chicken Nuggets or Fish sticks. At this time, we are not aware of any corn dogs that are available in our area that have the CN label, so please do not claim them if they do not meet the requirements. If you find a store that carries them, please let us know! Many providers would love this information.

* Keep labels/boxes/containers for the whole grain food you are claiming for the current day. If you transfer your whole grain cereal to another container, keep the label and ingredient list from the original package.

* Make sure you are using the correct milk for the ages of children in care. Remember, 2% milk is no longer an option for any age. Refresh yourself by looking through the packet that we left with you last year.

* Make sure all children in care are enrolled in the food program or have a "parent declined participation" form on file. (This is an option on the Child Enrollment Form.)

Please call us if you have any questions!