

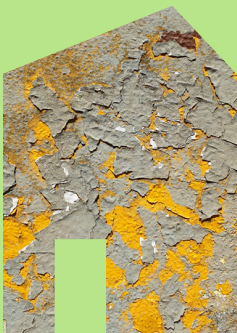
WHAT IS LEAD?



- Lead is metal that can get into the body without us knowing.
- Lead is especially harmful to babies and younger children.
- If children have lead in their body, it can harm their health as they grow. It can cause trouble with things like behavior and learning.
- The best way to keep children healthy is to keep them away from lead as much as possible.*

Children with lead in their body don't look or act sick. The only way to know is with a blood test.

*Old buildings built before 1978 can have lead paint and dust. This is the most common way children are exposed to lead in the United States.



This resource is meant to address culturally relevant sources of lead exposure that Middle Eastern & North African children may encounter, and is not meant to cover all possible sources or aspects of care.

We acknowledge families have shared these remedies and products for a long time to care for each other.



This resource was developed in collaboration with Mother Africa's Environmental Justice Department.

Non-DOH 334-619 June 2026

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

Funded by the Washington State Department of Health.



PROTECTING MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN CHILDREN FROM LEAD

Information for families to keep children safe from lead



- ✓ **Make smart choices**
- ✓ **Learn sources of lead**



MINIMIZING EXPOSURE

Small and gradual changes can make a big difference!

- Wash children's hands with soap & water regularly, especially before eating.
- Use a doormat and wipe or remove shoes before entering your house.
- Clean dust in older homes by wet mopping and wet dusting, especially near doorframes and windowsills where paint can chip.
- Adults should be aware if they may come into contact with lead at their job or hobbies.

Scan for more about how to keep children safe from lead.



SOURCES OF LEAD



Traditional medicines and remedies

Lead can sometimes be in traditional medicines. Some examples are: Al Murrah, Anzaroot, Bint al Zahab (bint or bent dahab), Bokhoor (noqd), Cebagin, Farouk, Santrinj, and Lozena (Lozeena). Talk to your child's doctor for what to do about health concerns before giving children traditional medicines or remedies at home.



Cosmetics

Lead can be in certain cosmetics in very high levels, such as Kohl. Kohl has also been used as a remedy for eye conditions. Do not put Kohl in children's eyes. Talk to your child's doctor if you're worried about an eye issue before applying anything to their eyes. Lead has also been found in some Henna. Do not use henna on babies or very young children. If you use henna on older children, choose natural henna. Do not use black henna, it is not safe for children.



Foods and spices

Some spices bought or sent from outside the U.S. may have lead in them. (examples: chili, curry, turmeric, cinnamon). Lead can get into spices from being grown in contaminated soil or through processing the spices. Avoid buying imported, unlabeled bulk spices. Choose instead spices that are sold in the U.S.



Cookware and dishware

Some cookware, like aluminum cookpots that are imported from outside the U.S., may contain lead. Refrain from cooking or serving food to children in old or imported cookware or dishware. They may have lead in the coating and can make food unsafe. Some cook and dish ware are labeled "lead-free" and are safer to use for making and serving food.



Toys

Some examples of toys that may contain lead include old or antique toys, or those imported from outside the U.S. If toys are deteriorated or you're not sure if they may be a lead hazard, it's best to keep them away from children. Check online for toy recalls in the U.S. Wash children's hands after playtime, especially before eating.



TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR



If you're not sure if a product your children have come into contact with contains lead, talk to your child's doctor about getting a blood lead test. Testing is free with Medicaid and covered by most insurances. If the test finds lead in a child's body, you and your doctor will work together to find where the lead is coming from. The doctor will keep checking the child's blood lead level to make sure they go down.



All children with Medicaid should get a lead test by age 6, even if they have not been around lead. You or your child's doctor can call or email us for free help about children & lead. Talk to your child's doctor for what to do about health concerns before using these products around children or giving children traditional medicines or remedies at home.