

# Lead Hazards and Vintage Items

When furnishing a home or using vintage items, care must be taken care must be taken to avoid lead poisoning.

Building components such as window sashes, doors, and balusters from buildings constructed prior to 1978 may contain lead paint. Other items such as painted tin panels, lead crystal, hardware, jewelry, toys, furniture and dishes may also contain lead. These vintage items may be found at flea markets, garage sales, antique shops and online. Working with or handling lead containing items may produce dust or debris that can be inhaled or ingested and result in lead poisoning.

## Why should I be concerned about lead poisoning?

Lead is a toxin. The possible effects of lead poisoning include:

- Delayed mental development, memory and concentration problems
- Shortened attention span, aggressive behavior
- High blood pressure, kidney damage, digestive problems, muscle and joint pain
- Fertility problems, harm to a developing fetus

Most individuals with elevated blood lead levels have no symptoms. The only way to tell is to have a blood lead test. Your health care provider can help you decide whether such a test is needed.

## What should I do if I own vintage items that contain lead?

Unless you are certain that the item does not contain lead, assume vintage items contain lead and take appropriate precautions to prevent lead poisoning. Do not allow children or pregnant women to come into contact with vintage items assumed or known to contain lead.

Wash hands after working with or handling vintage items.

Do not use vintage dishware or utensils for food service unless you are certain they do not contain lead. Do not use lead crystal for storage of any food or beverage.

Do not dry scrape or sand lead-containing items. Use water to control dust and debris during these activities. Protect your work area and wash with soapy water, followed by rinsing with clean water when the project is complete. Consider the application of a sealant product on finished vintage items to minimize the release of lead dust and debris.

Wear protective clothing that can be discarded or washed separately from other clothing. Consider the use of a half-face respirator with high efficiency particulate air filter (HEPA) filters.

Protect against lead contamination when transporting vintage items. Wrap items in plastic sheeting or otherwise contain to minimize any release of dust and debris.

Testing for the presence of lead may be conducted using an X-Ray Fluorescence device, by submitting a sample to a certified laboratory, or by using lead test kits.

## How Do I Get More Information?

For more information about lead please contact the Minnesota Department of Health. You can call us at (651) 201-4620, or visit our website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/lead>



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