

## How are Children Exposed to Lead in Paint?

Children are not generally exposed to lead from paint while the paint is still in the can or when it is being applied to a new surface.

Rather, lead exposure occurs after lead paint is on the wall, floor, toy or other surface.

Over time, paint on a surface will chip, wear and deteriorate. Lead present in the paint will then contaminate dust and soil in and around homes, schools and playgrounds.

Children playing get the contaminated dust or soil on their hands and ingest lead through normal hand-to-mouth behavior.

Children aged six and under are at particularly at risk since this is the group of children most harmed by lead exposure. A 2014 study published in a respected scientific journal estimates that a typical, one-to six-year-old ingests approximately 100 milligrams of house dust and soil per day.



## What are the Health Impacts of Low Level Lead Exposure?

A young child's brain undergoes very rapid growth, development and differentiation. Lead interferes with this process.

The impacts of even low level lead exposure are untreatable, irreversible and lifelong:

- Reduced intelligence
- Increased impulsiveness, aggression and delinquent behavior
- Fertility problems in men

The younger the child the more harmful the effects will be. The human fetus is the most vulnerable

### International Lead Paint Standards

Many highly industrial countries enacted laws, regulations or mandatory lead paint standards to protect the health of their people in the 1970's and 1980's. The standard adopted by the United States imposes an upper limit of 90 ppm on total lead (dry weight) for household paints and many other paint categories. Other countries have adopted mandatory limits such as 90 or 600 ppm total lead (dry weight).

## What is the Economic Impact of Lead Exposure?

Reduced intelligence has an impact on individuals and society as a whole. One study estimates a total cost of USD \$977 billion annually in low and middle income countries due to lead exposure.

The same study estimated losses of USD \$699.9 billion in Asia, or nearly 2% of Gross Domestic Product, and losses of USD \$134.7 billion in Africa, or 4% of Gross Domestic Product.

### What Can I Do to Protect My Child?

- Ask for paint with no added lead. Companies around the world have been producing paint with no added lead for many years and many major brands are lead safe.
- Regularly wet-wipe your home, especially around windows and doors where paint is most likely to chip and flake.
- Encourage your local markets to only stock paint with no added lead.
- Support efforts that restrict the lead content in paints to 90 parts per million (ppm).