

What is lead poisoning?

- Lead is a poisonous metal that is harmful to the body.
- Lead poisoning is most dangerous to young children and unborn babies. Small amounts of lead can seriously affect their health.
- Lead can harm a child's brain and cause learning, hearing and behavioral problems. It can also harm the kidneys and other organs.
- Lead in the body stops good minerals such as iron and calcium from working properly, which can affect growth and development.
- These effects can be permanent.

Have children tested for lead:

- The only way to know if a child has lead poisoning is by getting a blood lead test.
- Children should be tested at 12 months and again at 24 months of age.
- Ask your doctor or health care provider to do a blood test.

Children with lead poisoning often do not look or act sick.

What parents can do:

- A healthy diet can protect children from lead poisoning.
- Give children four to six small low-fat meals during the day.
- When children eat the right foods, their bodies absorb less lead.

Children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with full stomachs.



Lead poisoning robs children of the chance to attain their full potential.

Additional Nutrition Resources

Woman Infants & Children (WIC)

nmwic.org

EPA

www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-01/documents/fight_lead_poisoning_with_a_healthy_diet_2019.pdf

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

New Mexico Department of Health
1190 South St. Francis Drive, Suite N 1320
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: 505-827-0006

E-mail: DOH-CLPPP@state.nm.us

Website:

nmtracking.doh.nm.gov/health/poisonings/ChildhoodLeadPoisoning.html

Nutrition and Lead Poisoning Prevention in Young Children



Choosing the Right Foods

Foods rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C can help protect children from lead poisoning.

Iron

Iron helps protect the body from lead. Your body uses iron to make red blood cells. Iron is also needed to build a healthy brain, for normal energy use, and to maintain a healthy immune system. Red meats are excellent sources of iron.

Meat and seafood are good sources and include chicken, pork, beef, lamb, mutton, wild game (elk, deer, buffalo, antelope, turkey, rabbit), liver, hearts and kidneys, clams and shrimp, oysters, scallops, and sardines.

Other food sources include beans [canned, fresh, or dried]; dark-green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, mustard, collard, and dandelion greens; eggs, molasses, peanut butter, almond butter, iron-fortified cereals and breads (check the Nutrition Facts label); and fruits such as raisins, dried peaches, dried apricots, prunes, and figs.



Calcium

Calcium builds and maintains healthy bones and teeth and helps reduce lead absorption. Dairy foods are an excellent source of calcium.

Dairy Foods include milk, buttermilk, kefir, evaporated and dried milk, yogurt, frozen yogurt, yogurt drinks, ice milk, ice cream, cheese, cottage cheese, and products made with calcium-fortified milk substitutes. Cream, cream cheese, and butter are not included.

Seafood especially sardines and canned salmon.

Other foods including corn tortillas, broccoli, collard or mustard greens, spinach, kale, tofu, juniper ash (as in blue corn mush), and calcium-fortified orange juice.



Vitamin C

Vitamin C helps build healthy blood vessels, teeth, and bones. Foods containing vitamin C should be served with iron-rich foods to help the body absorb iron. Fresh, uncooked fruit and vegetables are good sources of vitamin C.

Vegetables including broccoli, cabbage, green peas, tomatoes, cauliflower, sweet green and red peppers, summer squash, potatoes (all kinds), dark green leafy vegetables such as kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens.

Fruits including oranges and orange juice, grapefruits and grapefruit juice, melons, berries, kiwi, guava, mango, papaya, persimmon, cantaloupe, lychee, and jujube.

Cooking Tips

- Eat fruits and vegetables raw whenever possible.
- Overcooking vegetables can reduce the amount of vitamin C and other vitamins.
- Cook with olive oil and vegetable oils. Limit using butter and lard.
- Bake, broil, steam, grill, or boil food instead of frying.
- Limit fatty foods. Fat can make a child's body absorb lead faster. Fatty foods to limit include fried foods (chips, fry bread, sopapillas, donuts, and fried potatoes) and high-fat meats (chorizo, hot dogs, sausages, and bacon).
- Limit eating at fast food restaurants.

Do not eliminate all fats.

Children under the age of 2 need fat in their diet for normal growth and brain development.



Wash hands before preparing and eating food.

- Give whole milk or soy milk with fat to children under two years of age. Choose low-fat products for children older than two.
- Do not store, serve, or cook food in traditional glazed pottery. They may contain lead.
- Avoid imported foods stored in lead-solder cans.
- Avoid Mexican candies containing tamarind or chili power.

Healthy Snack Options

Yogurt, fruits, nut butters, vegetables, graham crackers, corn tortillas, bagels, cereal with low-fat milk, and whole-wheat crackers with cheese are good snacks.