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SP605-A-What Do You Know About Lead Poisoning? Common Myths, Misunderstandings and the Facts

The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service

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What Do You Know About Lead Poisoning?

Common Myths, Misunderstandings and the Facts



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SP 605-A

➤ **Myth**

You cannot prevent your child from being poisoned by lead.

➤ **Fact**

Lead poisoning can be totally prevented. Ask your local health department or Extension agent for tips about how to remove lead safely from your home.

➤ **Myth**

Lead poisoning is not really a problem anymore. I know a lot of people who grew up around lead paint and they are perfectly healthy.

➤ **Fact**

Lead paint that was in homes 20 years ago is even more of a health hazard now. As paint gets older it will peel and chip. This creates lead dust that is harmful to everyone.

➤ **Myth**

Only children are at risk from lead poisoning.

➤ **Fact**

Adults can also suffer from hypertension (high blood pressure) when they have elevated blood lead levels.

➤ **Myth**

My child will not get lead poisoning if he or she does not eat paint chips or chew on things that have lead paint.

➤ **Fact**

While these are ways a child can be poisoned by lead, he or she only has to breathe lead dust to become poisoned. Toys and fingers that have come into contact with lead dust can also poison a child when put in the mouth.

➤ **Myth**

My child will not be hurt by lead unless he or she has very high blood lead levels.

➤ **Fact**

Even very low levels of lead in a child's blood can create long-term problems and can even affect learning and behavior permanently.

➤ **Myth**

My home would be better if I just leave the lead paint where it is. Having my home de-lead only creates more lead paint dust.

➤ **Fact**

If lead removal is done by someone who has been trained and licensed to do the job in a safe manner, he or she will clean up properly and prevent lead dust from being spread in the home.

➤ **Myth**

My child lives in the country. Only children who live in the inner city get lead poisoning.

➤ **Fact**

It does not matter if your child lives in the country or in the city. Any child can get lead poisoning. Lead paint can be found in any home built before 1978.

➤ **Myth**

Lead poisoning only comes from a child living in a house or apartment built before 1978.

➤ **Fact**

While lead-based paint is one of the major ways to become lead-poisoned, there are other sources, such as certain home remedies, lead crystal and soil contaminated by leaded fuel in cars or other vehicles.



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TENNESSEE CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM