10-5-2012

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

Martha Keel

Janice McCoy

Follow this and additional works at: http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_agexenvi

Part of the Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons, Environmental Health Commons, Environmental Public Health Commons, Other Pharmacology, Toxicology and Environmental Health Commons, and the Toxicology Commons

Recommended Citation


The publications in this collection represent the historical publishing record of the UT Agricultural Experiment Station and do not necessarily reflect current scientific knowledge or recommendations. Current information about UT Ag Research can be found at the UT Ag Research website. This Indoor Environmental Concerns - Lead Poisoning is brought to you for free and open access by the UT Extension Publications at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Environment (Indoor & Outdoor) by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.
What Do You Know About Lead Poisoning?
Common Myths, Misunderstandings and the Facts

➤ 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, which 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-leaded 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.