



# Lead Poisoning and Smelting:

## What You Can Do If You Live Near a Former Smelting Site

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### Lead Poisoning and Former Smelting Sites

People who live near a former smelting site can be at higher risk for lead poisoning.

Former smelting sites are places that used to make, heat or melt metals—including lead. Smoke from the smelting process can cause lead to get into the soil (dirt) around nearby homes. This can raise the risk of lead poisoning for the children who live there.

### Who Is Most at Risk for Lead Poisoning?

Young children are more sensitive to contaminants in the environment than adults. Children's bodies are still developing and lack defenses that adults have. Also, their behavior puts them most at risk for lead poisoning. Young children put things in their mouth and play on the ground, often around soil.

Even small levels of lead in a child's blood can affect how they grow, how they behave, and how they learn. Most children with lead poisoning do not show any signs of being poisoned.

### Get Your Child Tested for Lead

Ask your doctor to test your child for lead. Only a blood test can tell you if there is a high level of lead in your child's body.

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health suggests that all children under 7 years old be tested for lead at least once a year. Children between 9 months and 2 years are at highest risk.

If your child has been poisoned by lead, your doctor can talk to you about treatment.

### Reduce Your Child's Contact with Lead in Soil

- Wash your child's hands each time they come inside and before eating.
- Avoid having bare soil areas in your yard. Keep a healthy level of grass on play areas. You can add clean soil, sod, or wood chips each year, or provide your child with a covered sand box.
- Don't track soil/dust indoors. Ask family members to take off their shoes and dirty/work clothes at the door, out of the reach of children. Wash dirty clothing and other items before reusing them.

- Use a damp mop or dust cloth inside the home at least once a week. Use a vacuum with a **High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA)** filter on carpets. The filter will help to stop lead dust from getting into the air.
- Wash toys and pacifiers with soap and water for all children.
- Watch your child for signs of **pica** (eating nonfood items such as dirt). Tell your doctor if you see signs of pica in your child.
- Wash your pet often. Keep pets away from soil that they can track into your home.

### Help Your Child Eat a Healthy Diet

- Feed children healthy snacks. A child with an empty stomach will absorb more lead.
- Foods high in iron and calcium can help prevent lead poisoning.
  - For iron – eat dried beans and peas, lean beef and pork, chicken, turkey, spinach, whole grain breads, eggs, tuna and collard greens.
  - For calcium – eat cheese, cottage cheese, milk, yogurt, ice cream, milkshakes, pudding, cream soups, pizza, lasagna, macaroni and cheese.

### Find Out More About Lead

- Talk to your doctor.
- Call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-2788, or 1-800-440-LEAD.
- Call Barbara Allerton at the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 717-787-3350.
- Call Ana Pomales of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry at 215-814-5716.

### Get Help Online

- Identifying Lead Hazards in Residential Properties (EPA fact sheet)  
<http://epa.gov/lead/pubs/403fs01.pdf>
- Identifying Lead Hazards in Your Home (EPA fact sheet)  
<http://www.rst2.edu/ties/lead/university/resources/leadsuite/Manuals/3F403.pdf>
- Lead Prevention Tips (CDC)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>
- Suspected Former Lead Smelters (PADOH fact sheet)  
<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/environmental%20health/14143/health%20assessment%20program/954979>