











# Is There Lead in Your Soil?

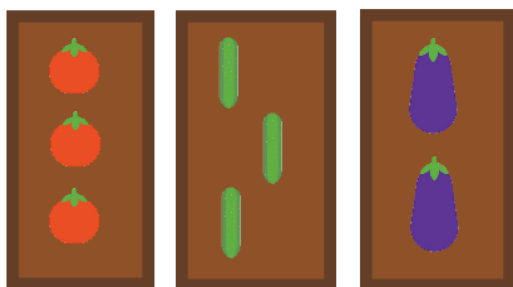
## And what you can do about it

### Why is lead in soil a problem?




-  Children who are exposed to lead can have problems with learning and behavior
-  Children under age 6, especially toddlers, face the greatest risk from lead exposure
-  Most lead exposure comes from chipping and peeling paint inside homes, but lead can also be found in other places, like soil and water
-  Flaking paint on the outside of houses, leaded gasoline from cars, and old industrial operations are all ways that lead can get into soil
-  Urban environments often have higher levels of lead in soil than other places
-  Contaminated soil can be brought into the home on clothing, shoes, and tools

### What can you do to avoid getting exposed to lead in soil?

-  Keep soil covered using durable surfaces like concrete, grass (where it grows well) and landscape fabric plus mulch (where grass does not grow well)
-  Put your garden or children's play area as far away as possible from busy streets or highways and older buildings, and away from where storm gutters empty next to your house (called driplines)
-  Wipe your feet on heavy duty doormats inside and outside entrances and leave your shoes at the door
-  Wash your child's hands after playing outside



#### TIPS FOR GARDENING

-  If you want to garden edible plants, cover the garden area with landscape fabric and then with clean soil and compost, or use raised planting beds.
-  Grow fruit (apples, strawberries, melons) and fruiting vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, beans). Wash and peel fruits and vegetables that you grow. You can use a small amount of vinegar to help remove excess soil.
-  Do not grow roots like potatoes, or stems and leaves, like herbs and lettuce. These are more likely to absorb lead from soil.




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## How likely is it that my yard has lead in the soil?

 It is likely that many houses in older neighborhoods in Philadelphia have lead in the soil in their yards. If you live in an older neighborhood, take steps to reduce your exposure to soil, regardless of whether or not you test your property


If you want to learn how to get your yard tested for lead, visit the EPA's website at  [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) to learn how

## What do the numbers mean for lead in soil?

 If you decide that you want to get your soil tested for lead, be sure to use a reputable testing laboratory as listed at [bit.ly/EPALeadingLabs](http://bit.ly/EPALeadingLabs)

 The results will have a number parts per million (ppm). Here's how to interpret that number:

Soil Lead Level (parts per million)	Level of Lead Contamination
Less than 150	None to very low. Most soil has low levels of lead in it (10—50 ppm)
From 150 to 400	Low. Precautions like washing hands and putting gardens far from streets and old buildings should be enough.
From 400 to 1,000	Medium. Treatment is required for play areas used by children under six years old. Take additional precautions before gardening.
Greater than 1,000	High. Do not garden in this soil and do not allow children to come into contact with it.

 You can learn more about how to treat lead in soil through Penn State Extension's website on crops and soil at [bit.ly/PSUEnvironmentalSoil](http://bit.ly/PSUEnvironmentalSoil)



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