

WHAT IS LEAD?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that can be hazardous to human health, especially pregnant women and children under the age of 6

WHY IS LEAD A CONCERN?

- Lead poisoning affects over 4 million households nationwide
- Lead poisoning can cause learning and speech problems, hyperactivity and nerve damage that cannot easily be reversed and are likely to last a lifetime
- Lead poisoning can effect both children and adults
- The effects of lead poisoning cannot always be seen
- A healthy diet of calcium, iron, Vitamin C and D will help reduce the amount of lead in the body
- Children become lead poisoned by hand to mouth ingestion of lead contaminated dust, soil or paint chips
- All children under the age of 6 should be tested at ages 1 and 2, or at least one time before the age of 6



WHY IS THERE LEAD IN THE SOIL?

- Lead is found naturally in the soil at low levels
- Most houses built before 1978 have lead paint on the inside and outside that can chip and peel off
- Soil may have become lead contaminated because of industry and exhaust from leaded gasoline (banned in 1986)

Soil Testing

The Forsyth County Department of Public Health can not test soil

Soil testing for lead can only be done at private labs for a fee. The cost of testing is the responsibility of the homeowner or private organization

Contact us at (336) 703-3174 for a list of Private Certified Labs

Fees and procedures for packaging and handling samples vary for each lab

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture will test homeowners soil for pH and nutrients

www.ncagr.gov or (919) 733-2655



Forsyth County
Department of Public Health

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
799 N. Highland Ave
PO Box 686
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

336-703-3174

www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/EnvironmentalHealth/lead

LEAD SAFE GARDENING



**FORSYTH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

336-703-3174

WHERE CAN LEAD BE FOUND IN YOUR YARD?

- Lead may be found in the top 4 inches of soil around your yard
- Soil will have the highest amounts of lead near outside walls of buildings, especially if it was built before 1978
- Soil lead levels can be higher closer to roads and highways
- Vacant lots in cities may contain a large amount of lead in the soil because older buildings with lead may have been torn down

WHAT VEGETABLES CAN HAVE HIGH AMOUNTS OF LEAD?

- Leafy vegetables or root vegetables (carrots, potatoes, beets, turnips, lettuce) can absorb the most amount of lead
- Lead is not usually found in the fruit of the plant such as tomatoes, peppers, beans, cucumbers and squash
- Soil with lead can collect on leafy vegetables (collards, kale, turnip greens) especially those close to the ground

HELPFUL TIPS

- Plant gardens in raised beds with lead free soil
- Add a ground cover (such as mulch or filter fabric) around the vegetables to reduce the amount of soil that may splash onto the vegetables
- Do not place vegetables in older windows to ripen, the windows may contain lead and contaminate the vegetables

BEST GARDENING PRACTICES

- Treat soil with lead free compost
- Till the soil as deeply as possible (at least 4 inches)
- Plant your garden away from buildings, garages and the street
- Keep the soil pH between 6.5 and 7.5 to help limit the amount of lead entering the plants



- Wear gloves and wash up after gardening
- Wet the soil before working in the garden to keep soil dust down
- Do not eat or smoke while gardening
- Do not let children eat the dirt
- Remove shoes/boots before entering your home



Before Eating your Vegetables

- Washing and peeling vegetables before eating will reduce the amount of lead on the surface
- Wash all vegetables with soap and water or a vinegar water mixture (1 part vinegar to 9 parts water)
- Throw away outer leaves of leafy vegetables and wash the inner leaves
- Rinse the peeled vegetables after they are peeled to remove additional lead

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