

## How are children exposed to lead?

Until the late 1970s, most homes contained lead-based paint. Even when that paint is covered over with non-lead-based paint, ordinary wear and tear breaks down paint into very fine, powdery dust. Children can unknowingly breathe in or swallow that dust, resulting in lead poisoning.

Lead can also be found in:

Soil

Water

Mini blinds

Imported pottery, toys, spices  
and cosmetics



For more information on childhood lead poisoning prevention:

Contact  
UT Extension Family and  
Consumer Sciences at:

865-974-8178

[tiny.utk.edu/leadpoisoning](http://tiny.utk.edu/leadpoisoning)

Tennessee Department of Health

615-532-8462

[tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/mch-lead.html](http://tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/mch-lead.html)

Or your local health department



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# A Guide to Understanding Your Child's Lead Screening



## Congratulations!



### Baby's first birthday is approaching....

In addition to the candle and cake, your baby's first birthday also brings his or her one-year well child **checkup**. During this visit, certain tests may be performed to identify or prevent potential problems.

One of the simple, routine tests you can expect is known as a lead **screening**. Parents should talk to their child's provider about lead testing if it has not been offered.

## What happens during a lead screening?

Child's finger is cleansed with alcohol wipe.

Finger is pricked; blood droplets are captured in small vial.

Blood is sent to a laboratory for analysis.

Your doctor's office will contact you if your child's blood shows an elevated lead level.

While there is NO safe level of lead, if your child's blood lead level registers 5 or greater, he/she will need a second test (a venous blood sample).

An elevated venous blood result will require a follow-up visit(s) with your child's doctor.

## What is the purpose of this test?



Lead poisoning is an environmental hazard for thousands of children. In the United States today, as many as 450,000 babies and children are exposed to lead, usually without anyone's knowledge.

Children can become lead poisoned without showing any outward signs of illness. Lead poisoning, however, can cause a variety of health problems, the most devastating being damage to a child's developing brain.

Testing at an early age assures that lead poisoning is discovered before a child's critical period of brain development (ongoing from birth through age six) has ended.