



Lead Poisoning and Prevention

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As a general rule, most of us are not thinking about lead in the environment as we go about our day. But the truth is, lead can be in a lot of places, primarily on the walls and windowsills of your home, in the water you drink, in the soil of your vegetable garden, and even in some consumer products. Makes you wonder, doesn't it? We all know that ingested lead is bad for you. No level of lead in the body is considered safe, especially for the very young. The bodies and brains of babies and young children are growing at a rapid pace and exposure to any amount of lead can cause growth issues, learning disabilities, hearing loss, and speech and memory deficits.

Kane County, like so many others in Illinois, has a lead pipe issue. In fact, [11.35 % of the water service lines in Illinois are made of lead piping](#); this is only second to Florida's 12.6%. Kane County has so many beautiful homes dating over a hundred years old. Chances are there is lead paint inside or outside the house. Unfortunately, lead does not go away. It sits in the top two inches of the soil, left over from the leaded gasoline era as well as from chipped paint from long ago. For this reason, playing with or planting a vegetable garden in soil around the perimeter of a house is highly discouraged.

Our lead program at the Kane County Health Department works closely with families who have a child who has tested positive for lead. But we also are in the business of prevention. We want to get the word out that there are many activities you can do at home to help prevent lead from getting into the body. These include frequent handwashing, taking shoes off once you get inside your home, eating nutritious meals, and keeping your floors clean.

If after reading this article you begin to think of the lead sources in your environment, I have been successful. So, to all of the parents, grandparents, and aunts and uncles out there, please take more notice of the environment to help ensure the safety of the children.

[Learn how the Kane County Health Department works to keep the air you breathe safe.](#)