

Protecting My Son from Lead

Jaslyn Corbett



When my son was a newborn, he came dangerously close to getting very sick. I found out that the apartment we were living in had lead paint. This was scary because the paint was chipping off the walls. I immediately made an appointment with my son's pediatrician to get him tested for lead. Meanwhile, I started looking up information on the dangers of lead paint.

I discovered that just one chip of paint can cause serious health problems in children six and under. Just the opening and closing of doors or windows can cause lead dust particles to fly into the air. The dust particles land on objects in the

house, and children often put those objects in their mouths.

Over the years, many toys have been recalled because they contained lead. I also found out that lead affects children more severely than adults.

Children's growing bodies absorb more lead. Their brains are more sensitive to the damaging affects of lead.

Lead poisoning can harm people in many ways. It can cause hearing problems, kidney damage, behavioral

problems, anemia, and brain damage. This is just a small list of possible problems. (See the chart for more about lead testing.)

My son was fortunate because his lead test came back negative. I decided to move out of the old apartment and find one with no lead. I am careful about all the hazardous things in our environment. I make sure he eats healthy and nutritious meals, and I make sure to keep him clean.

Some states require landlords to protect tenants from the lead in old paint. Find out what your state's lead laws are: <www.weareleadfree.net>

Get Your Child Tested for Lead	
Lead Level in micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL)*	Finger-stick Method (this method is inexpensive and allows a large number of children to be screened, but it is not as accurate as a venous blood test)
Less than 10	Re-screen in 1 year.
10 - 44	Your child needs a venous blood test within 1 month for a more accurate reading. Meanwhile, take precautions. Talk with your doctor immediately.
45 and above	Lead poisoning at this level is VERY SERIOUS. Talk with you doctor immediately. A blood lead level over 70 is a medical emergency.

Source: Detroit Health Department <www.lead-info.com>. *See next page for information about micrograms (µg) and deciliters (dL).

Jaslynn Corbett is a GED student at Bristol Community College in Attleboro, MA. She hopes to go to college when she finishes her GED. She is the mother of 2-year-old Carl.

