Protecting My Son from Lead

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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 effects 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.

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