

# Lead

## What is Lead, and where is it found?

Lead is a highly toxic metal found in small amounts in the earth's crust. Because of its abundance, low cost, and physical properties, lead and lead compounds have been used in a wide variety of products.

Some of these products are listed here:

- paint,
- ceramics
- pipes
- solders
- gasoline
- batteries
- cosmetics

Since 1980, federal and state regulatory standards have helped to minimize or eliminate the amount of lead in consumer products and occupational settings. Today, the most common sources of lead exposure in in Canada are lead-based paint in older homes, and contaminated soil.

## What are the health risks?

1. If not detected early, children with high levels of lead in their bodies can suffer from:
  - Damage to the brain and nervous system
  - Behavior and learning problems, such as hyperactivity
  - Slowed growth
  - Hearing problems
  - Headaches

2. Lead is also harmful to adults. Adults can suffer from:

- Reproductive problems (in both men and women)
- High blood pressure and hypertension
- Nerve disorders
- Memory and concentration problems
- Muscle and joint pain
- Decreased motor functions and muscle control