

# Protect Children and Pets from Lead-Dust

## Children and Pets require Lead Safe Play areas to reduce risk

**All children and pets are at risk. Those at highest risk are small pets and children one through three years old who:**

- Live in the city center.
- Live in areas of high automobile traffic.
- Live in or near homes where dry-sanding is being done or has been done in the past.
- Live in typical old homes of the Capital Region.
- Pick at or eat falling plaster or peeling paint.
- Play or dig in bare dirt next to an old house.

### **And children who:**

- Chew on woodwork or cribs and toys.
- Play with pets that have dirty coats.
- Put hands in dust on window sills and ledges.
- Put fingers or dirty toys in their mouth.
- Don't wash hands thoroughly before eating.

### **Children need good nutrition**

- Feeding your child a diet that meets Required Daily Amounts (RDA) of calcium and iron and is low in fat reduces the uptake of lead.
- Foods such as lean meats, chicken, fish, raisins, eggs, and iron-fortified cereals are a good source of iron. Foods such as milk, yogurt, and cottage cheese are good sources of calcium.

## Parents can reduce lead-dust in play areas

### **Outdoors**

- Provide a sandbox or add clean soil for a safe play area. Cover the sandpit when it is not in use.
- Do not allow children to play in bare soil. Insist that kids play on grassed or paved areas and not in bare soil next to houses.
- Keep your yard as clean as possible.
- Hose down paved areas.
- Clean toys after use outside.
- Practice good hygiene – wash hands well before eating and after playing outside.
- Keep pets and children from digging in soil unless tested and found clean of lead.

### **Indoors**

- Remove shoes upon entering the house to eliminate tracking of soil and lead-dust into the house.
- Clean play area often. Don't sweep. Damp mop with mild detergent; rinse thoroughly.
- Always use a vacuum with a high efficiency filtration. Now available at many stores.
- Use a damp cloth for dusting.
- Wash and rinse windowsills and baseboards once each week with dish detergent.
- Keep painted surfaces in good condition.
- Place heavy furniture in front of windows to keep kids away from sills.
- Cover window ledges and exposed paint with duct tape. The tape can be painted.

## Power sanding endangers pets and children

- Paint removal is *extremely hazardous!* Old paint contains lead. It is illegal to remove lead-based paint by power sanding or burning. Power sanding contaminates both outside and inside and contaminates play spaces. Funds for lead prevention were cut.
- Children should not live at home during renovation. Arrange with relatives or friends for their care. Conduct meticulous cleanup to remove dust after all work is complete. Floors and sidewalks must be washed and rinsed to remove lead-dust.
- Some painters fail to protect families and may not be following New York State guidelines. Scraping, collection and removal of loose paint chips is safer than sanding. Sanders with attached HEPA vacuum may be safe if used by well-trained people.
- Inside, it is best to cover lead-based paint with wallpaper, sheet rock or paneling, or an encapsulating paint. Seal old wood floors. These actions prevent lead-dust by locking down the lead, sealing the lead paint, and providing cleanable surfaces.
- Outside, new siding or encapsulating paint can be used to lock down lead-based paints.

**Preventing lead poisoning requires the cooperative action of the entire community.**

## Help Make The Capital Region Lead-Safe for Children

Howard W. Mielke created the original version of this handout for New Orleans ([lead.tulane.edu/PDFs/LEAD\\_SAFE\\_Handout.pdf](http://lead.tulane.edu/PDFs/LEAD_SAFE_Handout.pdf)). The *Our Soil* Team at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute ([oursoil.wp.rpi.edu](http://oursoil.wp.rpi.edu)) have revised it to apply to the Capital Region.