

Cleaning Up Sources of Lead in the Home



STEP 1 Regular Washing

Wash your child's hands and face often with soap and water. Make sure your child's hands and face are clean before eating and going to bed.

Be sure to wash toys, bottles and pacifiers often with soap, and water. Don't let your child play with any toys that have fallen on the ground until they have been cleaned with soap and water.

Don't let your child eat any food that has fallen on the ground.

STEP 2 Cleaning With A Special Vacuum

You can use a special vacuum cleaner called a High Efficiency Particulate Air Filter (HEPA) vacuum to clean up lead. The HEPA vacuum has a special filter that can pick up and hold small pieces of lead. Call the Minnesota Department of Health at (651) 201-4610 for a list of available HEPA vacuums.

Another option is to use a wet/dry vacuum in the wet setting to clean up the wash or rinse water. When you use the wet/dry vacuum, be sure to keep about two inches of water in the bottom of the canister. The water will help hold the lead dust. Only use the wet/dry vacuum to vacuum up the wash or rinse water, when you are cleaning up lead. Do not use the wet/dry vacuum to pick up dry dust, or lead paint chips.

Never use your household vacuum cleaner to clean up paint dust or chips from walls, floors or window sills and wells. Household vacuum cleaners are okay for regular cleaning jobs, once lead has been cleaned up. But when it comes to cleaning up lead, your household vacuum cleaner filter cannot pick up and hold the small pieces of lead – it can blow lead dust into the air where people can breathe it in.

STEP 3 Wet Washing



Wet washing is the best way to clean up lead dust. Wet wash window sills, wells, walls, floors and door frames often to clean up lead dust.

Step One

Use two buckets – one for the cleaning solution, and one for the clean rinse water. Clearly mark each bucket. Be sure to wear waterproof, chemical resistant, rubber gloves while you are wet washing. Keep the children away from this and all cleaners.



Step Two

Make a cleaning solution made up of household detergent and water. Mix according to the directions on the container.



Step Three

Pick up any loose paint chips and other debris that can be found in the window wells, sills, door frames, and floors. Put the paint chips and debris in a double thick garbage bag. Seal the bag.



Step Four

Wash the window wells and sills, door frames, walls and floors thoroughly with the cleaning solution. Use two separate sets of disposable rags or paper towels – one set for the washing step and one set for the rinse step.



Step Five

Rinse the area that you washed with cleaning solution with clean water, using a different disposable rag or paper towel. It is important to use a different rag or paper towel for the cleaning and rinse steps.



Step Six

Put all the rags, paper towels and paint chips in a double thick garbage bag. Seal the bag. Keep the bag out of the reach of children and pets. Call your county offices to find out how you can dispose of the lead debris at a household hazardous waste collection site, or place it in the garbage for pickup.



To request this material in another format contact:
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The children pictured in this fact sheet are not lead-poisoned. The products and brands shown are examples only and do not constitute a stated or implied endorsement from the Minnesota Department of Health.

Questions?

Call the Minnesota
Department of Health
at 651-201-4610