



Leave Lead At Work

You can carry lead home from work on your skin, hair, clothes, shoes, and personal items. If this happens, it is called take-home lead and can contaminate your car and home.

Because lead doesn't break down, once it is in your car or home, it can be a source of lead exposure for you, the people who live with you, and your community.

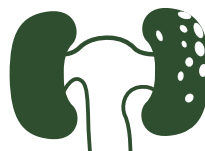
If you are an adult, lead exposure may increase your risk of



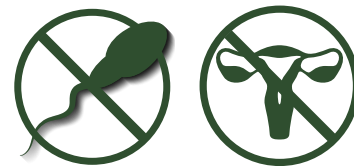
high blood pressure



heart disease



kidney disease



infertility (inability to have children)

If you are pregnant, lead exposure may increase the risk of



miscarriage



your baby being born too early

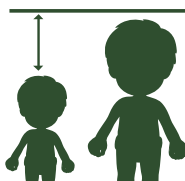


harm to your baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system

In children, lead exposure may



damage the brain and nervous system



slow growth and development



cause hearing and speech problems



**Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention**
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health

Take Home Lead: What can I do about it?

Before Work

- Remember that anything you take to work can get lead on it. Bring as few personal items as possible to work.
- When possible, bring food and water to work in containers that can be disposed of at work..

At Work

Don't take lead home with you! Keeping lead out of your home and car is easier than cleaning it up. Cleaning up lead is hard and can be expensive.

When you arrive:

- Change into work clothes and shoes that stay at your workplace.
- Store your clean clothes, shoes, and personal items in a dedicated clean locker or in a closed container away from lead.

When you take breaks and lunch:

- Always wash your hands with soap designed to remove lead before you eat, drink, touch your face, or smoke.
- Eat, drink, and smoke only in approved places away from lead dust.
- Never leave your work area without changing your clothes or at least washing your face, hands, and arms.

When you work with lead:

- Always wear required personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly.
- Avoid touching your face and mouth.
- Clean your work area throughout the day.
- Use a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum or wet methods to clean in places that have lead.
- Never dry sweep or use compressed air to clean up dust.
- After working with lead or after cleaning your work area, wash your hands with soap designed to remove lead with proper handwashing techniques as soon as you can.
- Do not remove PPE while in a lead work area. When removing PPE, follow the manufacturer's instructions.

When you are leaving work:

- Don't take home tools, scrap, and packaging that may have lead on them.
- Always shower and wash your hair before leaving work. If you can't shower at work:
 - o Wash as much of your skin as you can with soap designed to remove lead before going home.
 - o Change clothes and shoes before going home and leave dirty clothes and shoes at work for cleaning.
- If your workplace doesn't clean your work clothes:
 - o Store work clothes in a closed plastic bag away from all other clothes.
 - o Wash and dry work clothes alone and not with any other clothes.

At Home

- Never wear shoes in your home that you wore at work. Take off work shoes outside the car or home and store them in a closed plastic bag.
- If you can't shower at work, shower as soon as you get home. Do not touch household members or handle household items until after showering.
- Clean your car and your home often. For hard floors and furniture, use wet cleaning methods. For carpets and fabrics, use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- Use dedicated cleaning supplies to clean up lead. Do not use these supplies in the rest of the home. This will keep lead from spreading throughout your home.

At the Healthcare Provider's Office

- Tell your healthcare provider you work with lead. If your work doesn't test your blood for lead, ask your healthcare provider if you should be tested.
- Make sure **everyone in your household** tells their healthcare provider they live with someone who works with lead. Healthcare providers especially need to know if you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, and if children live or spend time in your household.

NIOSH is the U.S. federal agency that conducts research and makes recommendations to prevent worker injury and illness. NIOSH was established under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. It is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Suggested Citation

NIOSH [2023]. Take home lead: Prevention through Design for workers. By Couch J, Rinsky J, Grimes R, Carlson K, Reynolds L, Burnett G, Tsai R. Cincinnati, OH: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2024-101. <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH-PUB2024101>.

Get More Information

Find NIOSH products and get answers to workplace safety and health questions:

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348

cdc.gov/info | cdc.gov/niosh

NIOSH monthly newsletter: cdc.gov/niosh/eNews

DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2024-101

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSH-PUB2024101>

October 2023