

FACT SHEET

Living Safely With Lead

Top Tips for Mount Isa Families



The **Lead Alliance**



While lead is present in our region naturally and from industrial activities, there are simple measures we can all take to reduce our exposure. The most common way of absorbing lead, particularly for young children is through ingestion. Toddlers are generally at higher risk due to their hand to mouth behaviour and putting things into their mouths. There are several ways to manage lead living in our environment. To reduce the risk of elevated blood lead levels in our children and family follow the simple measures below.



What you can do to reduce the risk of elevated blood lead levels.

Your children **MUST** wash their hands before eating.

- You **MUST** wash your hands before making their meals. This will remove the lead dust from hands.
- **STOP** your children putting dirty toys and dummies into their mouths.
- **STOP** them eating the dirt when they are playing outside, it has lead dust in it.
- **WET MOP** your floors often to remove the lead dust.
- **WIPE** your kitchen benches and worktops with a wet cloth to remove lead dust before making your family meals.
- Your children **MUST** have healthy snacks and meals throughout the day. Children have small tummies and will absorb lead if they have an empty tummy, so keep them full.
- Eating healthy foods will help your body get rid of lead and will assist in reducing the risk of high blood lead levels.
- Keep pets outside, you and your children **MUST** wash your hands after petting animals.

What are the risks of elevated blood lead levels?

THE RISK for **babies and children** with high blood lead levels are:

- Learning difficulties at school, they may not learn as much as other children, their understanding of problems may be less than other children.
- Behaviour problems at home and school, they may become bad tempered and have tantrums, and may not behave well for you.
- Lower IQ, this may come from not understanding lessons at school and they may not be as smart as other children.
- All these problems and the damage lead poisoning does cannot be reversed, so you **MUST** make sure you do all you can to prevent lead absorption in your babies and children.

THE RISK for **pregnant women** with high blood lead levels are:

- May cause miscarriage, and premature birth.
- While the baby is growing in your womb it may not develop its organs properly, such as the brain and nervous system.
- You **MUST** make sure you do not have high blood lead levels when you are pregnant.

THE RISK for **breast feeding mums** with high blood lead levels are:

- The lead will transfer to your baby through your breast milk, you **MUST** not have high blood lead levels when breast feeding your baby.



FREE CALL 1800 457 547 for further information on managing lead in and around your home, or visit our website www.leadalliance.com.au

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I reduce my child's exposure to lead?

The Lead Alliance has detailed information on how to manage lead in Mount Isa through its website at: <http://www.leadalliance.com.au> or by calling FREE CALL: 1800 457 547 or emailing admin@leadalliance.com.au

The main things to do are:

- Wet wipe, wash and eat well.
- Minimise dust in the house and yard.
- Have regular blood tests for lead.

Where can I get my child's blood lead level tested?

Free blood lead testing is available at the following centres:

Queensland Medical Laboratory (QML)

Location: 13a Isa Street, Mount Isa

Phone: (07) 4743 4299

When: Monday - Friday 7.30am - 2.00pm

Maternal, Child Youth Health Centre

Location: 3 Lucy St (Laura Johnson Home Precinct), Mount Isa

Phone: (07) 4734 2168

When: Phone to make an appointment

Ngukuthati Children & Family Centre

Location: 70 Short Street, Mount Isa

Phone: (07) 4743 2900

When: Phone to make an appointment

Do I need a referral letter from my GP to get my blood lead test?

NO: You do not need a referral from your GP. You can talk to your GP about having a blood lead level test included on any other blood test that the GP is sending you or your children for.

Can I breathe in the Lead?

Only a minor amount of lead is absorbed into the body through the lungs. The highest risk of absorption is through ingestion. The most important thing to do is manage dust – remember, Wet Wipe, Wash and Eat Well. The air quality in Mount Isa is monitored constantly with data available from The Queensland Government, Department of Environment and Science (DES): <https://environment.des.qld.gov.au/air/data/search.php>

Is it safe for my child to go to school close to the mine?

Yes it is safe to send your child to any of the schools in Mount Isa. At Mount Isa schools, your child will be part of The Lead Alliance LEADSmart Education Program, which encourages healthier living within all Mount Isa educational and day care facilities.

Should I remove my children from a room when I am vacuuming?

Yes: You can reduce the potential exposure of young children and babies by putting them in a separate room when you vacuum. If you have carpeted surfaces a vacuum with a HEPA filter system is the best vacuum to remove lead dust from carpets. It is recommended that you remove young children from the room when vacuuming or sweeping floors as dust can be deposited back into the air.

Is it safe to use the tap water to make up the formula milk for my baby?

Yes: The Mount Isa Water Board has a comprehensive water quality monitoring program to ensure that the water supplied to Mount Isa meets national water quality requirements.

Is it safe to grow and eat vegetables from my garden?

Yes: Home grown fruit and vegetables offer many benefits to your family, especially young children; they provide a source of fresh produce and is also a rewarding form of recreation for families and children. There are a few simple ways to minimise the potential for exposure to metals from home grown fruit and vegetables:

1. Always thoroughly wash your fruit and vegetables.
2. Peel root vegetables before eating.
3. Make sure that you and your children wash your hands after gardening.

Where can I get sand for my child's sandpit from?

Sand must be obtained from a local supplier. Sand obtained through reputable suppliers is sourced from areas outside Mount Isa.

Can I take sand out of the river for my yard?

No: sand from the river is a resource of the State of Queensland and it is illegal to remove sand from river beds without the appropriate permits.



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