

Childhood Lead Poisoning in Vermont

There is **no safe level of lead in the body**. Lead can harm anyone, but young children and pregnant women are at special risk. The health effects of lead poisoning are permanent, but **lead poisoning is 100% preventable**.

How are children exposed to lead?

Dust from lead-based paint is the major source of lead poisoning among children. In 1978, lead was banned from house paint by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Over time, lead-based paint on surfaces crumbles into invisible dust, especially from opening and closing doors and windows. Even if the home has been repainted since 1978, the opening and closing of doors and windows can release lead dust from the original lead-based paint.

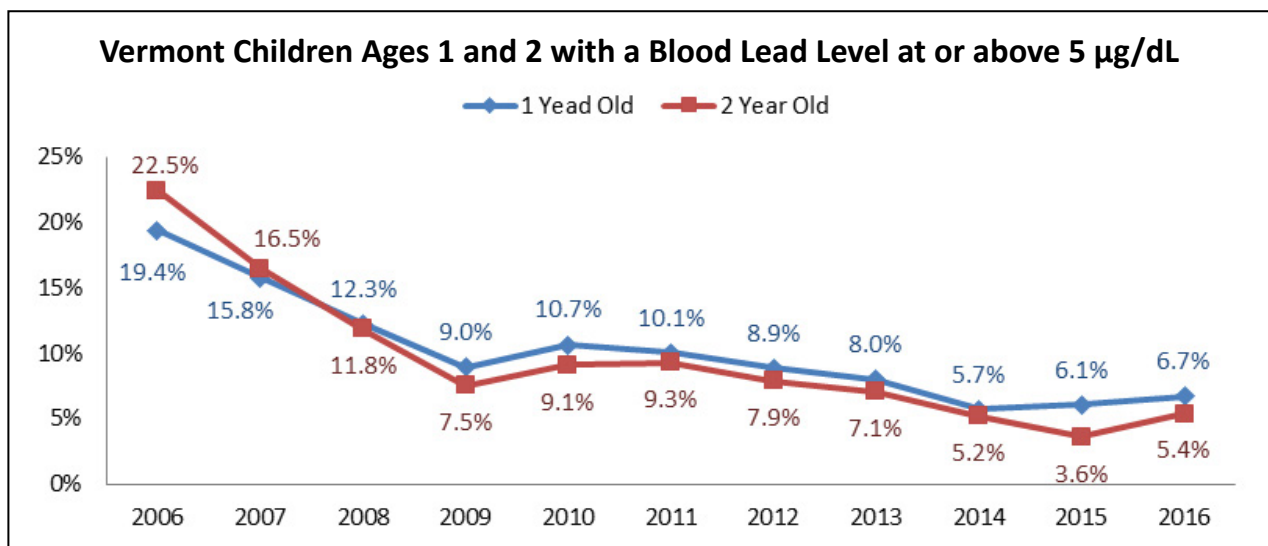
Young children are commonly exposed to lead by ingesting it. Lead dust clings to hands, toys and other objects that children put in their mouth. Children may eat, chew or suck on lead-painted objects such as windowsills, toys or furniture.

Children and pregnant women can be exposed to lead during renovation projects or whenever lead-based paint is improperly sanded, scraped or burned. There are two ways lead exposure can occur from these activities. One is from inhaling the lead dust. The other is from ingesting the lead dust if it gets on a person's hands and then in their mouth. This usually happens while eating, drinking or smoking, or from hand-to-mouth behavior in children.

Is lead paint still a problem in Vermont?

Yes. About 70% of Vermont homes were built before 1978 and likely contain lead-based paint.

The Vermont Department of Health investigates when children have a blood lead level at or above 10 µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter) to identify the source of the lead exposure and to help prevent blood lead levels from getting any higher. About nine out of 10 cases investigated by Health are from pre-1978 housing and the source of exposure was either from deteriorated lead-based paint, unsafe renovation practices or contaminated soil.



Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health.



Damage to the brain and nervous system



Slowed growth and development



Learning and behavior problems



Hearing and speech problems

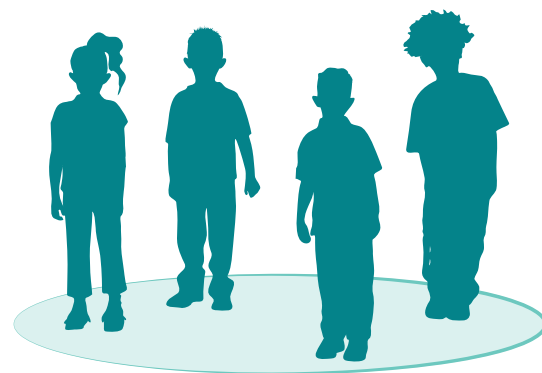
This can cause:



Lower IQ

Decreased ability to pay attention

Underperformance in school



The Impact

In 2016,

627

Vermont children ages 1 to 5 years had blood lead levels high enough to damage their health.



70%

of homes in Vermont were built before 1978 and likely contain lead-based paint.



It can cost

\$5,600*



per year in medical and special education costs for each seriously lead-poisoned child.

*based on 2001 estimates and children with blood lead levels at or above 25µg/dL