



Is there lead in my house?

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Eight out of 10 homes in the United States could contain lead in paint if they were built before 1940, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

At that time, lead was added to paint in homes to make it more resistant and durable. However, in 1978, the manufacture and sale of lead-based paint was banned for use in homes because studies showed lead was a poisonous substance that, when ingested or inhaled, could damage the brain and other organs of children and adults.

According to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Childhood Lead Program Manager, Kevin Officer, "The problem is not the existence of lead in the home but the presence of lead hazards." For example, he continued, "lead hazards occur when lead-based paint is chipped, cracked or damaged. Repairing damaged lead-based paint immediately can prevent most lead poisonings from occurring."



Lead inspections conducted by IDPH in the homes of children poisoned by lead-based paint points to windows, doors, floors, porches, and bare soil as common areas where children come into contact with lead. "These are typically areas around the home where children play, eat and sleep," the health official commented.

Families who rent older homes and whose children have been poisoned by lead-based paint, often comment that "We have nowhere to go," in response to housing that is lead-safe and affordable. Regarding this issue, Consultant Officer said that while some repairs to lead hazards can be costly, there are less costly repairs that can be done to fix lead hazards.

Click [HERE](#) for information on repairing lead hazards in a safe and inexpensive way. You can also click [HERE](#) to find a certified lead professional to fix lead based paint hazards safely.

For more information, contact the Iowa Department of Public Health at (515) 281-3225 or 800-972-2026. Visit us online at <https://idph.iowa.gov/Environmental-Health-Services/Childhood-Lead-Poisoning-Prevention>.