

Lead and Your Health

Lead is a powerful neurotoxin, which means exposure to lead can damage the brain. It can also injure other soft tissues and organs, can interfere with the formation of blood, and exposure to enough lead can even kill. Both children and adults are vulnerable to lead's health effects.

Common Health Effects on Children:

- Brain damage resulting in IQ loss, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, inability to concentrate, and/or behavior problems
- Stunted growth
- Hearing problems

Common Health Effects on Adults:

- Hypertension
- Anemia
- Reduced sperm count
- Increased risk of miscarriages

Young children are most vulnerable to lead's effects because prior to age six, their brain and central nervous system are still forming and easily susceptible to damage. For an adult to suffer significant health effects, exposure to lead would have to be sustained and more intense. Most adults who are affected by lead have been exposed in an occupational setting, such as working as a house painter or in a battery recycling plant.

Pregnant women are at special risk, because the lead they absorb crosses the placenta and enters the fetus.

Related Information

- [Health Effects of Lead - EPA](#)