

How are we exposed to lead?

Lead enters our bodies if we swallow contaminated food, water, dust or breathe in lead particles. For children this can happen easily. They might play in dusty areas and then put their fingers or toys in their mouths.



Official lead guidance from UKHSA



If your home was built before 1980, it may contain lead paint both inside and outside. This can be a problem if the paint is peeling or chipping and when your home is redecorated or repaired, or through wear and tear.



Some homes still have lead in their plumbing which can affect drinking water.



Lead from petrol and industry is still in the soil. This lead can be tracked back into your home on shoes. Once inside, it becomes part of your house dust.



Sometimes there is lead in old or imported toys, kitchen items like plates, cups, pots and drinking glasses, spices, traditional medicines and cosmetics like kohl and sindoor



Lots of jobs and hobbies have potential exposure to lead. These include preparing surfaces for painting, construction or demolition, shooting, fishing, and crafts like stained glass work.

What can I do?

1 Reduce and prevent exposure as much as possible.



2 Talk to your GP about a blood test if you think you or your family are exposed to lead.



3 Call your water supplier for a water test if you are worried about lead water pipes in your home.



Need help or have questions?

Email: pb_aware@northumbria.ac.uk |
Website: www.leadsafefutures.org



Access additional lead information on our website

Translations (Romanian, Urdu, Arabian, Polish and Tigrinya), an audio version, and other accessibility options are available on our website.

Thank you for helping us create lead-safe futures for children across the UK.



Be Lead Aware Stay safe from lead.

What is lead?

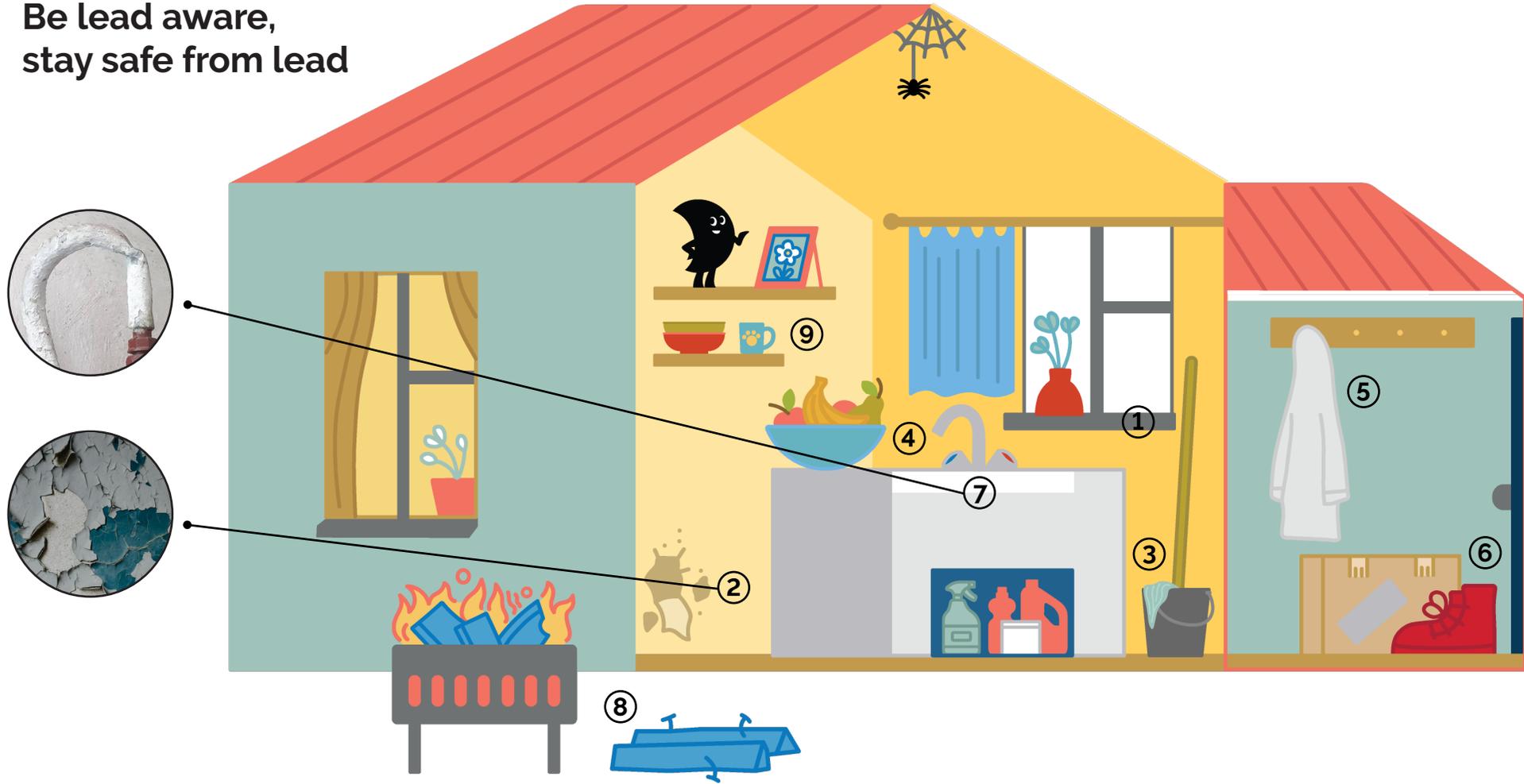
Lead is a poisonous metal. It was once common in everyday products like paint, windows, pipes, petrol, drinking glasses, kitchen items and even toys. We can still be exposed to lead today.

Is exposure to lead a problem?

Yes. Lead harms nearly every part of the body, including the brain, heart, kidneys and the reproductive system. Children, unborn babies, and pregnant women are very sensitive to lead and even low levels of lead exposure can reduce a child's attention span, reduce their school success, and increase aggressive behaviour.



Be lead aware, stay safe from lead



1 Prevent your child from picking off and licking or eating paint. Keep paintwork in good condition.

2 Cover over peeling paint until it is safely removed, ideally by a specialist. Never dry-sand or scrape lead paint.

3 Vacuum and clean floors, window frames, windowsills and other surfaces weekly. Use a damp mop or cloth. Focus on cleaning areas where your child plays.

4 Wash hands before eating. Eat a healthy and varied diet.

5 Don't bring dust into your home from work or hobbies.

6 Take outdoor shoes off when you come into the home. Wash hands often especially after playing outside or gardening.

7 If your plumbing might include lead pipes, run a washing up bowl of cold water in the morning before using water for drinking or cooking.

8 Don't burn lead-painted wood in your garden or fireplace/wood-burning stove.

9 Limit the use of products from outside Europe that might contain lead. These include some traditional medicines, sweets, spices, cosmetics (such as kohl and sindoor), and some types of traditional glazed cookware.