

# FACTS ABOUT LEAD CONTAMINATION

## LEAD IN PAINT

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- About 75% of the U.S. houses and apartments built before 1980 contain lead paint, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- More than half of all American homes contain old lead paint, with concentrations up to 50% lead by weight.
- Children can be poisoned by chewing on a lead painted windowsill or eating lead paint chips, but the more common cause of poisoning is getting lead dust on their hands and into their mouths.

**Lead dust** is released from paint in three ways:

1. Chipping and peeling paint
2. Home renovation projects that disturb lead paint
3. Lead paint ground up by friction, such as on window sashes, porch floors, etc.

A newer coat of paint does not protect you from any lead-based paint that may have been applied years ago, especially if the surface is worn, rubbed, walked-on or bumped. If there is any friction or impact to a surface ever painted with lead-based paint, then assume that dust containing lead is coming from that surface. Children do not have to eat paint chips to be poisoned.

## LEAD IN SOIL

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Outside, in public playgrounds and in their own yards, the dirt where children play may contain high lead levels. Decades of peeling exterior building paint, air emissions from leaded car exhaust, and pollution from smelters and other industries are significant sources. In Oakland, California, a Department of Health study showed that two-thirds of the children living close to major highways had blood lead levels in the toxic range. The highest levels of lead in soil usually are found close to the foundations of homes painted with exterior leaded paint.

## LEAD IN WATER

### DID YOU KNOW THAT...

The EPA estimates that drinking water is the source of about 20% of Americans' lead exposure. Lead comes from old lead pipes and service lines in city systems and from home plumbing. Leaded solder was legal for use on drinking water lines until the 1980's and is still for sale in hardware stores. Faucets and plumbing fittings may legally contain up to 8% lead. The greatest risk is to infants on formula mixed with contaminated water.

*Let the experts at Mid-Atlantic laboratories help you  
find out if you have a lead problem*