

Good personal hygiene habits and healthy nutritional practices can limit absorption of and reduce exposure to lead.

### WHAT ARE PERSONAL HYGIENE HABITS THAT CAN REDUCE POTENTIAL LEAD EXPOSURE?

One way young children ingest lead is through dust or soil that settles on their hands as they play. When children put their hands in their mouths, they may swallow lead-contaminated dust or soil, which can then get into their bloodstream. Good personal hygiene habits, such as consistent handwashing, reduces the likelihood of this happening and is the best way to reduce the number of germs on children's hands in most situations. Children should wash their hands with soap several times a day using the Six Steps of Handwashing.

Step 1: Wet hands with clean, running water.

Step 2: Add soap, then rub hands together making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water; be careful not to wash the lather away.

Step 3: Scrub the front and back of hands, between fingers and under nails. Wash for at least 20 seconds, the amount of time it takes to sing the ABCs once or the Happy Birthday song twice.



Step 4: Rinse hands from wrists to fingertips under clean, running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down to your elbows.

Step 5: Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel or paper towel.

Step 6: Turn off the faucet with the used towel. Remember, dirty hands turned on the faucet.

### HOW CAN WE REDUCE POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO LEAD WHILE OUTDOORS?

Children may be exposed to lead in outdoor environments through contaminated soil or breathing in dust containing lead. To reduce potential exposure to lead while outdoors we can:

- Check the exterior of your home, including porches and fences, for deteriorating paint.
- Wash outdoor toys and playground equipment regularly.
- Use designated picnic, camping, biking and hiking areas.
- Use water from clean sources for drinking, cooking or washing.

To avoid tracking soil into your home:

- Put doormats outside and inside all entryways.
- Remove shoes before coming inside.
- Wipe pets' paws prior to bringing them indoors.

## HOW MAY NUTRITION ASSIST IN REDUCING THE ABSORPTION OF LEAD?

Eating a variety of foods gives children the vitamins and minerals they need to grow up healthy. When children do not have enough calcium or iron in their bodies, their bodies may absorb lead instead of these nutrients. A diet that includes foods rich in calcium, iron and vitamin C may assist in reducing the absorption of lead.

Important facts to understand are:

- An overall unhealthy diet high in fat and oil may increase the rate of lead absorption; and
- A child with an empty stomach will absorb more lead.



Review the *Module 3 Worksheet* for information on specific foods that contain calcium, iron and vitamin C.

## WHAT ARE SOME MEALS THAT CONTAIN CALCIUM, IRON AND/OR VITAMIN C?



### BREAKFAST:

- Oatmeal, sliced banana and 100% orange juice
- Vegetable omelet, apple sauce and low-fat milk
- French toast, orange slices, yogurt and 100% fruit juice
- Iron-fortified cereal with low-fat milk, topped with raisins
- Wild rice porridge with berries



### LUNCH:

- Turkey & tomato sandwich, coleslaw and low-fat milk
- Tuna salad sandwich on whole-grain bread and pear slices
- Lean cheeseburger on a whole-grain bun and 100% cranberry juice
- Shrimp, squash and brussels sprouts



### DINNER:

- Sloppy joe, watermelon and low-fat milk
- Macaroni and cheese, stewed tomatoes and melon slices
- Chicken, rice, green beans and berries
- Salmon, rice and bell peppers

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

For more information, contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323) or visit [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).