

# Lead Prevention Quarterly Newsletter

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Web sites to  
check out:

<http://www.nsc.org/issues/lead/>

National Safety  
Council gives  
information about  
lead poisoning.

For questions about  
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## Lead poisoning prevention week Oct 22-28

by Linda Hyder

Each year, approximately 310,000 children across the United States and over 250 in Tennessee are lead poisoned. National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 22-28.

Take a few minutes to think about the potential of lead poisoning in your home and neighborhood. The most common way children are lead poisoned is from exposure to lead paint, which is commonly found in homes built before 1978.

Disturbing the lead paint allows dust to settle on toys, windowsills and floors. Children can then easily swallow bits of dust and paint chips. Other sources of lead poisoning include water from lead pipes, soil, food or drink stored in lead-glazed pottery or dishes and leaded crystal, imported vinyl mini-blinds, some folk medicines and ethnic cosmetics, auto fumes, shot gun pellets, battery casings, and some hobby materials. Also some cheap imported jewelry may contain lead.

Children from birth to six years are at a high risk for lead poisoning because of their growing bodies. Pregnant women living in houses built prior to 1978 are also at high risk.

Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body. Lead poisoning often occurs with no obvious symptoms. The only way to test for lead poisoning is by asking your health care provider for a blood test. Children less than six years of age can be tested, if a parent suspects lead poisoning. The Sevier County Health Department does such checks through a blood test.

## Hidden Lead Hazards in the Home at Christmas

Take care this holiday season and protect your family from coming into contact with harmful residues that may be in ornaments, lights, toys or water. Lead can be present in unexpected places.

Occasionally, cherished heirloom ornaments are decorated with lead paint. Dust particles can get pressed onto the hands of family members decorating the tree. Very young children are most susceptible to lead poisoning and may put their hands, or even the ornaments, into their mouths.

Holiday lights can contain lead in the wiring. Parents should handle the lights, since dust may fall out of the wiring and onto children.

Some toys on the market could be manufactured with lead paints. Look at the package and if you are uncertain whether the toy contains lead paint, don't buy it. Some imported toys may contain lead, but do not have a warning. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at <http://www.cpsc.gov> publishes a listing of products that have been recalled for various hazards.

Lead crystal glassware can leach the metal into beverages. Children and pregnant women should not use this type of glassware. Likewise, decorative dinnerware sometimes contains lead. Inspect labeling carefully to make sure dishes and food serving products are lead free.