What is lead?
Lead is a heavy metal that occurs naturally in the Earth’s crust. It is found in a variety of places including old buildings, drinking water, and soil. Exposure to lead can be very dangerous, especially for children, but precautions can be taken to avoid contact.

How to prevent exposure
- MA Lead Law requires that all children be tested for lead between the ages of 9-12 months, and again at ages 2 and 3.
- Practice good nutrition! Give children plenty of calcium and iron.
  - Lead paint
    - Inspect and maintain all painted surfaces.
    - Clean around painted areas where friction occurs (doors, windows).
    - Keep your home dust-free.
    - Take extra precautions when renovating (search for “Don’t Spread Lead” guide).
  - Lead in drinking water
    - Address water damage quickly and completely.
    - Flush water outlets used for drinking or food preparation.
    - Use only cold water to prepare food and drinks.
  - Lead in soil
    - Teach children to wipe and remove their shoes and wash their hands after playing outdoors.
    - Wash children’s hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.

Ask questions
- How old is the home or childcare facility, and is the paint in good condition? If it was built before 1978, there is a higher chance that lead is present.
- Does the landlord keep common areas clean?
- Has the landlord tested the water?
- Has another child in the building tested high in blood lead level?

Know your rights
- Legally, landlords must disclose their knowledge of lead!
- You have the right to test a home/apartment before buying/renting.
- If the landlord is renovating, they must follow lead-safe guidelines.

If you’re concerned about lead at home or in a childcare setting
- BPHC provides environmental investigations and case management services for families with children who have elevated blood lead levels.
- BPHC also conducts investigations for parents and property owners who request a lead paint inspection.
- Please call 617-534-5965.

Is there financial assistance for deleading?
- Massachusetts’ Get the Lead Out program provides low cost financing to owners of 1-4 family properties to remove lead paint and reduce possible exposure to children. Call 617-854-1000.

For more information, please call:
Environmental Health Office: 617-534-5965

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