Lead is a metal that naturally occurs in the earth’s crust. While lead can be useful in certain circumstances, it can be extremely toxic to organic life, causing health problems in both humans and animals.

While exposure to lead can come from lead pipes, most lead exposure is from tainted soil and dust, not water.

Lead pollution can remain in the soil for hundreds and sometimes even thousands of years.

**WHAT IS LEAD?**

**DO YOU KNOW**

- Lead was used by ancient Romans to make water pipes.
- The chemical symbol for lead (Pb), comes from the Latin word “plumbum,” which translates as “lead pipe.”
- The word “plumber” is also derived from this root.

**THE PROBLEM**

Even low levels of lead in the blood of children can result in:

- Behavior & learning problems
- Permanent decreases in intelligence
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia
- Kidney damage
- Permanent decreases in intelligence
- Behavior & learning problems
- Slowed growth
- Hearing problems
- Anemia
- Kidney damage

**WHAT IF LEAD IS HIGH WHERE I LIVE?**

If lead levels are too high, it may not be safe to garden directly in the soil or even to play outdoors!

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- Anemia
- Hearing problems
- Permanent decreases in intelligence
- Kidney damage
- Behavior & learning problems
- Slowed growth

**WHAT IF LEAD IS HIGH WHERE I LIVE?**

- Wash your hands after working or playing outside.
- Wash your feet if playing outside barefoot.
- Wash your pet’s paws.
- Build raised vegetable beds with fresh, clean topsoil and compost.
- Take off your shoes immediately when entering the home.
- Add mulch or native plants or even gravel to add a protective barrier.

**NEXT STEPS**

If your home has elevated lead levels and if you have small children who live with you or regularly visit you, please have your children tested immediately. Contact the Marion County Public Health Department (MCPHD) at (317) 221-2155 and request a blood test.

If your property needs remediation, MCPHD may have resources available, depending on your circumstances and needs and depending on what is available at the time of your request. Contact the MCPHD at (317) 221-2155.

**WHY KEEP INDIANAPOLIS BEAUTIFUL?**

KIB GreenSpaces turn vacant lots into vibrant community gathering spaces.

We add new protective layers when we install:

- Trees and mulch
- Raised vegetable beds
- Nature play areas
- Native plants
- Walking paths
- Shelters

This lowers the availability of lead in the surface soil!