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PREVENT LEAD POISONING

Lead poisoning is caused by breathing or swallowing lead and it can be passed from a mother to her unborn baby.

Too much lead in your body can:

- Put you at risk for miscarriage
- Cause your baby to be born too early or too small
- Hurt your baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system
- Cause your child to have learning or behavior problems

Lead can be found in:

- Paint and dust in older homes, especially dust from renovation or repairs.
- Candy, makeup, glazed pots, and cold medicine made in other countries.
- Work like auto refinishing, construction, and plumbing.

Now is the time to keep your baby safe from lead poisoning. Here's what you can do:

Watch out for lead in your home. Most lead comes from paint in older homes. Lead-based paints were banned for use in housing in 1978. All houses built before 1978 are likely to contain some lead-based paint. When old paint cracks and peels, it makes dangerous dust. The dust is so small you cannot see it. You can breathe in lead dust and not even know it. Home repairs like sanding and scraping paint can make dangerous lead dust. You should not be in the house while someone is cleaning up after renovations, painting, or remodeling a room with lead paint.

Talk to your doctor. Talk to your doctor about any medicines or vitamins you are taking. Some home remedies and dietary supplements may have lead in them. It is also important to tell your doctor about any cravings you have such as eating dirt or clay, because they may have lead in them.

Avoid certain jobs or hobbies. Some jobs or hobbies, such as construction or home renovation/repair in older homes, and battery manufacturing or recycling involve lead exposure. Also, avoid take-home lead dust if a household member works with lead. Have the household member change into clean clothing before coming home. Keep work shoes outside and wash all work clothes separately from the rest of the family.

Eat foods with calcium, iron, and vitamin C. These foods may help protect your unborn baby. Calcium is in milk, cheese, yogurt, and green leafy vegetables like spinach. Iron is in lean red meat, beans, cereals and spinach. Vitamin C is in oranges, green and red peppers, broccoli, tomatoes and juices.

Store food properly

Some dishes may contain lead. It is important to store and serve your food properly. Avoid using imported lead-glazed ceramic pottery produced in cottage industries. Avoid using pewter or brass containers or utensils to cook, serve or store food. Avoid using leaded crystal to serve or store beverages. Do not use dishes that are chipped or cracked.

*This information was obtained from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information on Lead, please visit their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>
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