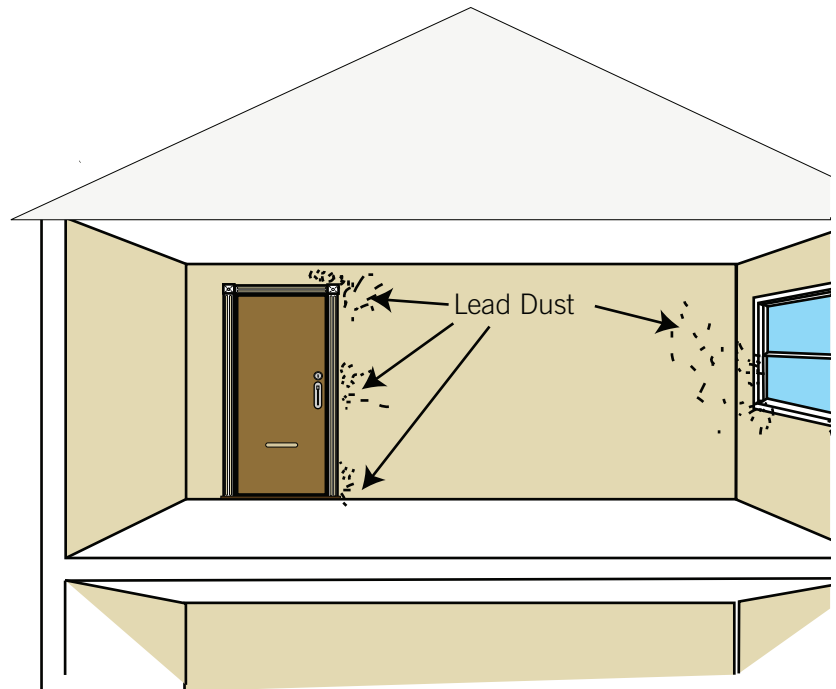


# Lead Based Paint

Older paint contains lead. Over the years, governments have regulated the phasing out of lead in paint entirely. If your house was built before 1960, the paint used during construction would have contained a great deal of lead. Reduction started soon after this and lead paint was completely eliminated by the 1980s. If your house was built before 1978, the paint still likely has some lead in it and the EPA has ruled that after April 2010 all these homes will require special procedures when renovations are performed.

So what's wrong with lead based paint? Lead is unhealthy if ingested and it is surprisingly easy to ingest. It has a way of finding its way into our diets, particularly into the diets of toddlers. For instance, painted door jambs and window sashes create paint dust during use. For toddlers who spend a great deal of time on their hands and knees, and who 'test' the world through their mouths, this dust presents a serious health hazard if it contains lead. The most troubling issue with lead however, is that it can also be absorbed through the skin upon contact.



Lead dust at wear surfaces.

## Testing

Knowing if you have lead based paint is half the battle. The paint can be tested on site by a home inspector using EPA approved equipment that can give you instant results. The alternative is to send a sample to a lab for testing. Your home inspector can collect the samples and submit them to an approved laboratory for analysis.

## Dealing with Lead Based Paint

Living with lead should not be an option, especially if there are children under the age of six in a home. Constant cleaning and encapsulation may be good temporary measures, but you will be better served to remove the offending coatings, surfaces or components. The only way to be certain about the presence or absence of lead, is by testing, whether by virtually instant onsite methods or samples submitted to an approved laboratory.

## REPLACE:

Wear surfaces can be replaced rather than encapsulated. For example, you can remove and replace door jambs with new wood.

## REMOVE:

Where encapsulation or wood replacement is not practical, you can remove the paint using chemical strippers. This task is time consuming and expensive and should only be done by an expert lead abatement contractor since proper containment is essential.

## A Few Tips

- Lead poisoning does not happen overnight so do not panic
- For peace of mind, you can test your children for lead poisoning with a simple blood test done by your family physician
- Have your home tested for the presence of lead paint by a qualified home inspector using EPA approved equipment
- Do not attempt to remove lead based paint yourself as you may create a much bigger problem by spreading lead dust around your house

