



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

Texas Department of State
Health Services

A GUIDE FOR CLEANING LEAD-SAFE



Blood Lead Surveillance Branch

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Cleaning Lead-Safe



If you live in an older home (built before 1978) or live with someone who works with lead, you have a greater risk of breathing in lead dust. Children under the age of 6 are at greater risk of breathing in and ingesting lead dust. Lead affects the brain development and growth of small children. It is important to reduce their contact with lead dust, one way being cleaning upkeep. Cleaning is an important component of reducing your risk of lead exposure in the home.

Before you Clean: Things to Know

- Always use rubber gloves, if you can. Covering your hands helps prevent lead dust from getting on your hands as you clean.
- If there is visible peeling paint, mist this area with a spray bottle. Dry, peeling paint releases lead dust. Keeping these areas wet minimizes the release of lead dust as you clean. If any paint chips have fallen, pick them up with a rag or paper towel.
- Have a plastic garbage bag ready to use as you clean. Place any used rags, paper towels, or paint chips in this bag.
- If you're cleaning walls, surfaces, and uncarpeted floors will need a set up of three buckets:
 - One bucket with an all-purpose cleaner,
 - One bucket with clean water, and
 - One empty bucket

Items You'll Need

Plastic Garbage Bags

Rubber Gloves

Mops
(String, Sponge, Pad)

HEPA Filter Vacuum

Rag/Paper Towels

Spray Bottle

All-Purpose Cleaner

Three Buckets

Tips

Never use abrasive cleaners to clean walls and surfaces containing lead. These cleaners can dissolve paint, releasing fumes that can contain lead.

Cleaning items like steel wool and scour pads should never be used. They can release more lead dust from surfaces.

Remember to rinse the rag/paper towel often. Rinsing prevents the spread of lead dust to other surfaces.

Change the water in clean water bucket often. Pour the dirty water in the toilet.

Cleaning walls & surfaces weekly can control lead dust and other lead hazards.

Cleaning Lead-Safe: Walls & Surfaces

1. Wet the rag, paper towel, or sponge, in the all-purpose cleaner bucket. Wring it out.
2. Mist walls and surfaces as you clean to minimize the spread of dust. Wipe in one direction, when able. Clean from top to bottom, working your way towards the floor.
3. When you are ready to wet the rag again, squeeze rag into the empty bucket. Rinse rag in the clean water bucket. Then squeeze rag into the empty bucket. Wet rag in the all-purpose cleaner bucket and repeat.

Other surfaces to keep in mind:

- Vinyl mini-blinds
- Trimming
- Anywhere else where dust settles
- Windowsills
- Tables
- Tabletops
- Doors

Cleaning Lead-Safe: Uncarpeted Floors

1. Before you mop, make sure there are no loose paint chips or other debris on the floor. If there is, use a paper towel to pick them up. Dispose of the paper towel and paint chips in a garbage bag.
2. Soak mop in the all-purpose cleaner bucket. Wring out excess liquid before mopping.
3. Mop small areas of the floor at a time. Remember to start from the corner farthest from the door and mop towards the door.
4. When you are ready to wet the mop again, wring the mop into the empty bucket. Rinse mop in the clean water bucket, and squeeze the mop into the empty bucket. Wet the mop in the all-purpose cleaner bucket and repeat.

Tips

Never use a mop with a scrubber strip attached. Scrubber strips can spread lead dust into the air if they disturb the floor.

Remember to avoid hitting baseboards or the wall. Doing so can release lead dust into the air.

Remember to rinse the mop often. Rinsing prevents the spread of lead dust as you mop.

Change the water in clean water bucket often. Pour the dirty water in the toilet.

Cleaning floors weekly can control lead dust and other lead hazards.

Reminders

Never use a household vacuum to pick up paint dust or chips from walls and floors. Household vacuums are not equipped to trap lead dust and can release the dust back into the air. Only use a vacuum with a HEPA filter. HEPA filters keep lead dust from re-entering the air.

Never use a broom to dry sweep carpets and rugs. Never shake or beat rugs. These methods can release, and even spread, lead dust into the air.

Cleaning floors weekly can control lead dust and other lead hazards.

Cleaning Lead-Safe: Carpeted Floors

Carpets

1. Start at the farthest point away from the door and vacuum towards the door.
2. Vacuum a small area at a time (2x5)
3. Use a wet sponge or rag to remove any stains.

Area Rugs

1. Vacuum the top of the rug. Fold in half.
2. Vacuum the back of the rug. Flip rug over and vacuum the other half.
3. Use a wet sponge or rag to remove any stains.
4. Remember to change the clean water bucket often. Pour water into the toilet.

Cleaning Lead-Safe: Children & Laundry



Toys & Blankets

Always wash or wipe down toys, blankets, and other items your child uses or plays with. Because young children put objects in their mouth, if these items have lead dust on them, children run the risk of ingesting lead. Clean these items daily if they fall to the floor; otherwise, wash weekly.

Hand-Washing

Remember to wash your child's hands before eating or sleeping. Removing lead dust from their hands reduces the risk of ingesting lead.

Laundry

If you or someone you live with works with lead, wash their work clothes separate from the rest of the laundry. This prevents the spread of lead dust when you wash. When you are done washing these work clothes, run the washer while empty to make sure any remaining lead is washed away.

Take-Home Lead

If you or someone you live with works with lead, remember to remove all work clothes before you enter your home. You could bring lead dust from work into your home. Remove work shoes before entering and keep them away from small children. If possible, shower immediately when you get home to remove any lead dust from your hair or skin.



Cleaning Lead-Safe: After You're Done



Any water used to clean up should be poured into the toilet. You shouldn't pour this water in sinks or in areas where you prepare food.

Remember to put all the gloves, rags, and paper towels in plastic garbage bags. Tie the bags and throw them away.

For sponges, rags, and gloves you plan to use again, do not rinse these items in sinks or areas where you prepare food. It's important to wash and rinse these items separately.

If you plan to wash these items in the laundry machine, wash them apart from your regular clothes. Run the washing machine on empty to remove any remaining lead residue.

DSHS & HHSC Resources

You can find this booklet and other educational materials at the Blood Lead Surveillance Branch's website at [***dshs.texas.gov/lead***](https://dshs.texas.gov/lead)

Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) runs the 2-1-1 program. The 2-1-1 program provides information about health and medical services for the state of Texas.

You can dial **2-1-1** or 877-541-7905, or visit 211texas.org



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

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