

Keep Your Dishes Unleaded!



What is lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning happens when you swallow or breathe lead. There is no safe level of lead a person can have. Lead poisoning is 100% preventable.

Lead is a serious health concern for all everyone.

You can find lead in glazes and paints used to decorate ceramic dishware. Lead makes these colors vibrant, and the glaze gives it a smooth, and strong, finish. Adding lead in these items makes it unsafe for everyday use.

A little lead adds up.

There's no safe level of lead. Our bodies can remove lead once it's inside our bodies. But, lead can build up faster than your body can eliminate it. At this point, lead begins to affect our bodies and make us sick.



When we use ceramic dishware for preparing, cooking, and serving our food, we run the risk of lead poisoning.

How exactly does lead enter my food if I use ceramic dishware?

When you prepare, cook, or serve food in ceramic dishware, lead from the dishware can leach into the food. While hot food makes it more likely for lead to contaminate your food, any temperature of food is at risk when it comes into contact with leaded surfaces. The longer food and drinks stay in the dishware, more lead can get into your food and drink.

How can I tell if my dishware has lead?

You can't tell by looking at a dish if it has lead. But a dish is more likely to have lead if:

- **The dish is from Latin America, Asia, or another country outside of the United States (U.S.)** If the dish's label says it is lead-free, then it is safe to use.
- **The dish is homemade.** Homemade dishware, even if you made it in the U.S., could contain leaded glaze.
- **The decoration on the dish is on top of the glaze.** If you can see brushstrokes above the glaze, or if the design is faded, it's not safe to use.
- **The dish is from a yard sale, flea market, or antique store.** Antique dishes were made before the U.S. developed guidelines about the dangers of lead in dishware.

I heard I could remove lead from my dishes. Is this true?

There is no way to remove lead from dishware. Before buying a dish or tableware, you should check to see if there is a "lead-free" label. If you can't find the label, it's safer to avoid them. If you have ceramic dishes or tableware that you suspect have lead, stop using them. You can keep them as decoration, but they are not safe to use.

How can I keep my family safe?

- Eating a healthy diet of Vitamin C, Calcium, and Iron prevents lead from building up in your body.
- Eating at regular times reduces your risk of absorbing lead, since empty stomachs are more likely to absorb lead.
- Visit your doctor and ask for a blood lead test. Children are the most vulnerable for lead poisoning. Making sure they are safe from lead poisoning is important for their health, and your peace of mind.