

Preventing lead poisoning

An avoidable tragedy with devastating health, environmental and economic costs—especially for those living in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)



3.5 million people

die each year from cardiovascular disease related to lead exposure.

815 million children

are affected by lead poisoning.

3 times higher

Blood lead levels in LMICs are 3 times higher than in high-income countries

Lead poisoning is often invisible, but it has devastating health consequences.

- There is no safe level of lead exposure.
- Lead exposure comes from a variety of sources — paint, spices, cosmetics, cookware, industrial fumes, toys, and food grown near lead industry sites.
- Lead exposure causes anemia, hypertension, heart disease, renal impairment, immunotoxicity and toxicity to reproductive organs.
- In children, lead exposure causes cognitive delays and behavioral disorders, reduced attention span, increased antisocial behavior.
- Lead exposure in women — before or during pregnancy — can cause miscarriage and stillbirth, and increases risk of premature birth and low birth weight.

Prevention works

Identifying and acting on sources of lead exposure — including cosmetics, spices, and other consumer products as well as informal industrial lead use — can stop avoidable suffering and make longer, healthier lives possible.

WHO's PREVENT Technical Package for Lead Poisoning Prevention will include best practices for countries, consumers, and industry stakeholders to map sources and prevent exposure through both policy design and capacity-building.



P	R	E	V	E	N	T
Prioritize sources and measure exposures	Respond to elevated blood lead and address ongoing exposures	Engage partners, private sector and the public to increase and sustain momentum	Verify that regulations align with best practices to protect health	ENforce regulations to ensure compliance	Track progress: evaluate im- plementation and impact on exposure	



X-ray florescence detectors rapidly measure lead in paint, soil, and consumer products.

For more information, visit

resolvetosavelives.org/how-we-save-lives/lead