

Nutrition and Lead

Lead poisoning is one of the most common childhood problems in the United States. Nutrition is one way to reduce the chances that your child will have high levels of lead in his blood.

The foods a child eats can affect the amount of lead he can have in his body. Your child (2-6 years old) should eat foods from each of the following food groups to grow and stay healthy:

Milk group (2-3 servings), meat group (2 servings), fruit/vegetables (5 servings), bread /cereals (6 servings).

Offer regular meals and healthy snacks to your children. This can help reduce their chances of having high blood lead levels.

The levels of lead in the blood may increase if:

- ▶ **The diet is too low or too high in protein.** Offer your child 2 protein foods during the day: fish, beans, lentils, chicken, and peanut butter.
- ▶ **The diet is too high in fats.** If your child is over 2 years old, choose low or non-fat dairy foods. Serve less high fat foods, such as fried foods, fries, chips, and candy less often.
- ▶ **The diet is low in calcium.** Foods high in calcium include: milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, tofu, and dark green leafy vegetables. Offer 2-3 servings of these foods each day.
- ▶ **The diet is low in iron.** Food high in iron include: meats, chicken, dried beans, cereal with iron, dark green leafy vegetables, and dried fruits.
- ▶ **The diet is low in zinc.** Foods high in zinc include: meats, chicken, and whole grain cereals.



An empty stomach may increase the chances of higher levels of lead. Healthy snacks low in fat and sugar are an important part of your child's day. Some children can't eat a lot at one meal. They may be hungry before it is time to eat again.

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