

DIY-sampling / lab analysis lead kits

You take the samples, send them to a lab for analysis, we tell you what the results mean



Why test for lead?

Test for lead around homes or workplaces to find out if either of them is the source of your or your children's or pets' elevated blood lead level (greater than 2 micrograms per decilitre). Not enough blood lead testing has been done to know for sure but it's a fair assumption that the majority of Australians have a blood lead level above 2 micrograms per decilitre. Knowing where the lead is coming from allows you to remove the lead poisoned individual from the source or the source from their life, and thus to lower the blood lead level and reduce consequent health impacts, or even prevent early death from lead poisoning.

Test for lead if you want to prevent lead poisoning. Test for lead if you have any reason to suspect that it is present in the soil, dust, or paint in your house; particularly if you intend to renovate, and particularly if you have young children or intend having children. Test for lead in any source of water that doesn't come from the mains supply: rainwater/tank water, bore water, dam water, ground water, or river water. Test any products you want to be sure do not contain the level or leachable form of lead that would make them unsafe for use. Such products may include children's toys, jewellery, pewter, artificial turf, ceramic ware, PVC products and chewable kids bibs and clothing snaps and fasteners etc. If you are thinking of growing vegetables, or building a bird or pet enclosure, you will want to know if the soil contains too much lead.

Good samples to test for lead from this scene in an old house would include:

1. windowsill dustwipe;
2. playfloor dustwipe;
3. vegetable garden soil;
4. bare soil in play area;
5. rainwater from the kitchen tap;
6. any flaking paint especially from wood or metal surfaces;
7. painted or PVC toys or other items mouthed by the child; for example:
8. children's clothing snaps or fasteners.

[Drawings by Anne Roberts]



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We recommend that childcare centres use the kits to test that their equipment, play areas (artificial turf, soil etc) and toys are lead-safe. Landlords can be confident they are renting out lead-safe premises if they have used a kit to test dust on floors and windowsills, and in garden soil.

What would make you suspect that lead was present in the soil or dust or paint or drinking water or consumer product?

Lead is present in an astonishing number of materials, (see "[Sources of Lead](#)") but the greatest sources of lead particles in and around houses has been from paint and leaded petrol.

Paint: Any house painted before 1970 (in Australia, where this kit is mainly sold), or before 1978 in the USA, will almost certainly have been painted with paint containing lead, which, if removed or renovated without using lead-safe methods will leave lead dust or particles behind. If you're not sure about dates, the sample kit will provide the answer as to how much lead is in the paint.

Leaded petrol This was phased out in Australia for on-road vehicles in 2002, but there is a legacy of leaded dust in ceiling voids and other building cavities, and in dust in the living space, especially in carpets, and in yards and gardens.

This lead dust from paint or petrol is the greatest source of lead which children are commonly exposed to in homes. However, sucking on or swallowing leaded jewellery has also caused fatal lead poisoning in children.

What is the DIY-Sampling Lab Lead Test Kit?

There are two sample kits available: The 2-sample kit costs AU\$100, the 8-sample kit costs AU\$250. You are not required to use all the tests in one go. You can take some samples and send them off to the testing laboratory, and follow up later with any or all of the remaining samples. You pay postage for sending the samples to the lab. All other costs are included in the kit price.

Because we believe that every Australian who is drinking non-mains water should test their water for lead, we are offering a special price on a new kit "**The Water Lead Test Kit**" to test a standing and a flushed water system sample. **The 2 sample water kit costs \$55.**

Sydney Analytical Laboratories are accredited by NATA - the National Association of Testing Authorities. The lab charges The LEAD Group at a charity rate, so the kits are cheaper than if you purchase analysis at a lab as an individual. And you receive the numerical results in writing, by email, ready to print if needed. If you go direct to a lab for lead analyses they will not explain what the results mean. We do, and we advise you on how to respond to the results - what action to take, if any.

Proceeds from the sale of our kits go towards running the free Global Lead Advice and Support Service and maintaining www.lead.org.au - the website of The LEAD Group [ABN 25819463114]

[Online order form](#) OR [print form](#) for mail order or fax. Or you can phone your details through to 02 9716 0014. You'll be so glad when you know where the lead is and how to get rid of it.