



De-Leading Your Home Challenge



CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

The goal of this challenge is to reduce lead in your home, creating a safer environment for you and your family. Try this challenge over the next four weeks.

Lead exposure is a serious health concern, especially for young children and pregnant women. Lead can affect various organs and systems in the body, including the brain, heart, and kidneys. As a toxic metal, lead can cause significant health problems when it accumulates in the body. This challenge will help you identify and reduce sources of lead in your home, protecting your family's health and well-being.

HOW DOES LEAD EXPOSURE IMPACT YOUR HEALTH?

- **Heart Disease:** In adults, lead exposure is associated with high blood pressure and an increased risk of heart disease.
- **Kidney Damage:** Lead can harm the kidneys, impairing their ability to filter waste from the blood.
- **Reproductive Health:** Lead exposure can adversely affect reproductive health, leading to reduced fertility and pregnancy complications.
- **Cumulative Effects:** Lead accumulates in the body over time, especially in bones. It can be released back into the bloodstream during periods of high bone turnover, such as pregnancy or osteoporosis.
- **Chronic Conditions:** Prolonged exposure to lead can cause chronic conditions, including anemia, cognitive decline, and joint and muscle pain.

What will this challenge help with?

This challenge supports various aspects of health and safety, including:

- **Reduced Risk of Chronic Diseases:** Lowering lead exposure can decrease the risk of heart disease, kidney damage, and reproductive issues.
- **Improved Developmental Health:** Protecting children from lead exposure can prevent developmental delays and cognitive impairments.
- **Enhanced Overall Health:** Minimizing lead in your environment promotes general well-being and prevents the accumulation of lead in the body.
- **Safer Living Environment:** Creating a lead-safe home reduces the risk of accidental exposure and promotes a healthier lifestyle.

DE-LEADING YOUR HOME

Over the next four weeks, we will help you take actionable steps to reduce the presence of lead in your home. This challenge focuses on identifying potential lead sources, employing safe cleaning practices, reducing exposure, and maintaining a lead-safe environment. By participating, you'll ensure a healthier and safer space for your family.

Let's get started!

Week 1: Identify and Test



Check for Lead Paint: If your home was built before 1978, it might contain lead-based paint. Look for peeling or chipping paint and get it tested. Use a lead paint test kit available at hardware stores or hire a professional for a thorough inspection. Ensure that any renovations or repairs are done by certified professionals who follow lead-safe practices.

Test Your Water: Homes with old plumbing may have lead in the water. Get your water tested by contacting your local health department or water supplier for a certified laboratory. If high levels of lead are detected, use a water filter certified to remove lead or consider replacing lead-containing plumbing fixtures.

Week 2: Safe Cleaning Practices



Wet Cleaning: Use a damp cloth for dusting surfaces and mop floors to prevent the spread of lead dust. Avoid dry dusting and sweeping, as they can disperse lead particles into the air. Wet cleaning is more effective in containing and removing lead.

HEPA Vacuum: Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter to clean carpets and rugs, which can trap lead particles. Standard vacuums can release lead dust back into the air, but HEPA filters are designed to capture very small particles, including lead dust.

Week 3: Reduce Exposure



Seal Surfaces: If you discover lead paint, seal it with a new layer of paint or another sealant to prevent chips and dust. This method, known as encapsulation, can be an effective short-term solution. Ensure the surface is clean and intact before applying the sealant.

Replace Fixtures: Consider replacing old plumbing fixtures and pipes that may contain lead. Lead pipes, brass fixtures, and solder can release lead into drinking water. Replacing them with lead-free materials can significantly reduce exposure.

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Week 4: Maintain and Educate



Regular Maintenance: Keep painted surfaces in good condition and clean regularly to prevent lead dust buildup. Address any peeling or chipping paint immediately and continue using wet cleaning methods and HEPA vacuuming to maintain a lead-safe environment.

Educate Your Family: Teach your family about the dangers of lead and how to reduce exposure. Encourage frequent hand washing, especially before eating, and avoid bringing lead-contaminated items, such as work clothes, into your home. Educate children about not touching peeling paint or chewing on painted surfaces.

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

Congratulations on completing the De-Leading Your Home Challenge! By taking these steps, you've made significant progress in reducing lead exposure in your home and creating a safer living environment. Continue to practice these lead-safe habits and stay informed about maintaining a healthy home. Celebrate the positive changes you've made to protect your family's health and well-being!

Resources: For more detailed information on reducing lead in your home, visit the Government of Canada's Health Guide at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/lead-based-paint.html>



Congratulations on completing the **De-Leading Your Home** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

