

EFFECTIVE CLEANING TECHNIQUES

You can reduce your family's potential exposure to lead dust in the home by using specific cleaning techniques that allow you to safely remove lead dust particles and paint chips.

WHAT IS LEAD DUST?

Lead dust is household dust that contains lead. Lead dust can form when lead-based paint is scraped, sanded or heated. Lead dust also forms when painted surfaces containing lead bump or rub together, such as when windows are opened and closed, or from deteriorating old lead-based paint.

WHAT IS A LEAD DUST TRAP AND WHAT ARE SOME EFFECTIVE CLEANING TECHNIQUES?

A lead dust trap is a space or object where lead dust can easily gather on, in or under. Many areas in your home could be a potential lead dust trap. Wet washing weekly with a mop, cloth or sponge, warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner is the best way to clean up lead dust.

There are specific cleaning methods for different areas of the home as detailed in the table below.



AREA OF THE HOME	POTENTIAL LEAD DUST TRAP	RECOMMENDED CLEANING TECHNIQUE
Floors, Baseboards, Carpets and Rugs	Lead dust can be dispersed from deteriorated lead-based paint applied on floors and baseboards. Carpets and rugs can contain lead dust dispersed from deteriorated lead-based paint on floors, baseboards and walls.	Clean floors and baseboards with a clean, wet mop, cloth or sponge. Vacuum carpets using a vacuum cleaner equipped with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter, which traps extremely small particles such as lead dust.
Windows and Windowsills	Lead-based paint on windows, window sills and troughs (area between the interior window sill and the storm window frame) can chip or flake as a home ages and after repeatedly opening and closing resulting in lead dust settling on and around windows.	Clean windows, sills and troughs with a clean, wet cloth or sponge. Window sills and troughs with large amounts of dust may require using a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter. After vacuuming, follow up by cleaning with a damp cloth or sponge.
Air Duct Covers and Radiators	The surfaces or covers of air ducts (areas along walls and floors covered by metal grates) and radiators can be covered with dust, although the concentration of lead dust is generally not as high as in other areas of the home.	Wipe the surface of air ducts and radiators monthly using a clean, wet cloth or sponge. Frequently replace all air filters (including HEPA filters) in the furnace and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

AREA OF THE HOME	POTENTIAL LEAD DUST TRAP	RECOMMENDED CLEANING TECHNIQUE
Doors, Doorframes, Walls and other Painted Surfaces	Dust from lead-based paint dispersed into the air from painted walls, windows and floors can settle on doors and door frames. Lead from outside sources may also stick to the surface of exterior doors and then be tracked inside the home.	Wipe down doors, door frames, walls and other painted surfaces with a clean, wet cloth or sponge.
Stairs, Railings and Banisters	Walking on stairs painted with lead-based paint causes the paint to flake and chip, which disperses lead dust on stairs, railings and banisters.	Clean stairs, railings and banisters with a clean, wet mop, cloth or sponge.
Furniture	Lead dust dispersed into the air can settle and collect on furniture, such as tables and couches, and then re-enter the air when you vacuum, dust or sweep.	Dust furniture weekly with furniture polish to prevent the spread of dust into the air. Regularly clean upholstered furniture, such as a couch, with a HEPA vacuum or with wet washing.



CLEANING HINTS:

- Declutter your home.
- Clean yourself out of a room by starting at the furthest point within the room and work your way to the doorway.
- Clean from top to bottom in every room.
- Wash hands and cleaning supplies in a sink (or area) that preferably is not used for food preparation.



WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

For more information, contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC) at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323) or visit www.epa.gov/lead.