

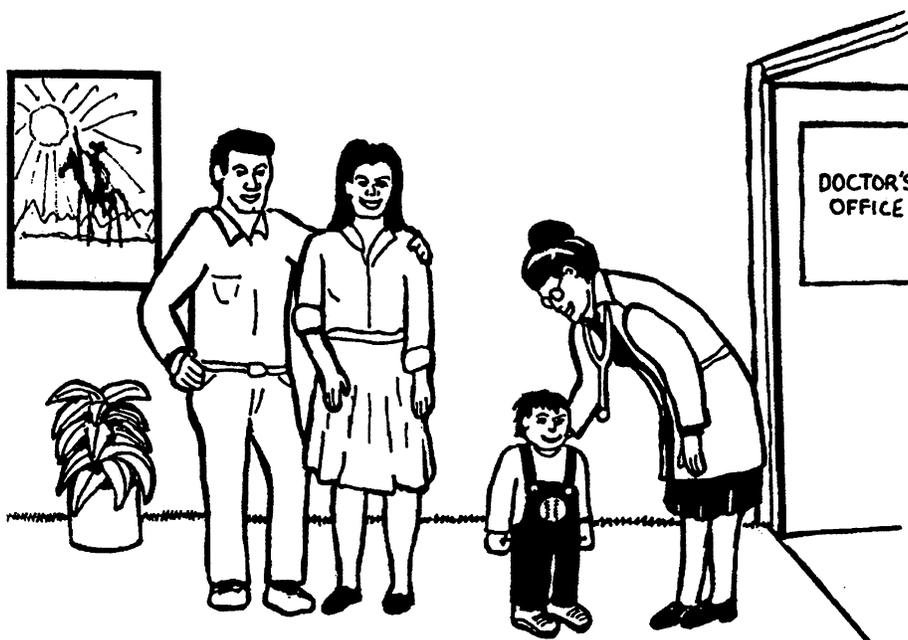
US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

Going to the Doctor

1 At the Doctor's Office

Directions: Read or act out the following passage.

Mr. and Mrs. Borges and their son, Alexi, are visiting the neighborhood health clinic. Alexi is two years old and his parents have brought him to the clinic for a checkup. They are waiting in the examining room when the doctor enters.



Doctor: Hello. How are you today?

Mrs. Borges: Fine. Thank you.

Doctor: How is Alexi?

Mrs. Borges: He had a cold last week. He was sneezing and coughing. He would not eat and was very tired.

Doctor: How is he now?

Mrs. Borges: He seems fine.

[The doctor checks Alexi's temperature and listens to Alexi's lungs and heart with a stethoscope. Then, she examines his ears, throat, and eyes.]

Doctor: Alexi is a very healthy boy.

Mrs. Borges: Yes, he is. He usually eats and sleeps well and he is very active. He plays with his toys all the time.

[The doctor looks at Alexi's medical record. She turns a few pages.]

Doctor: So far, Alexi has received all his necessary immunizations.

Mrs. Borges: Good.

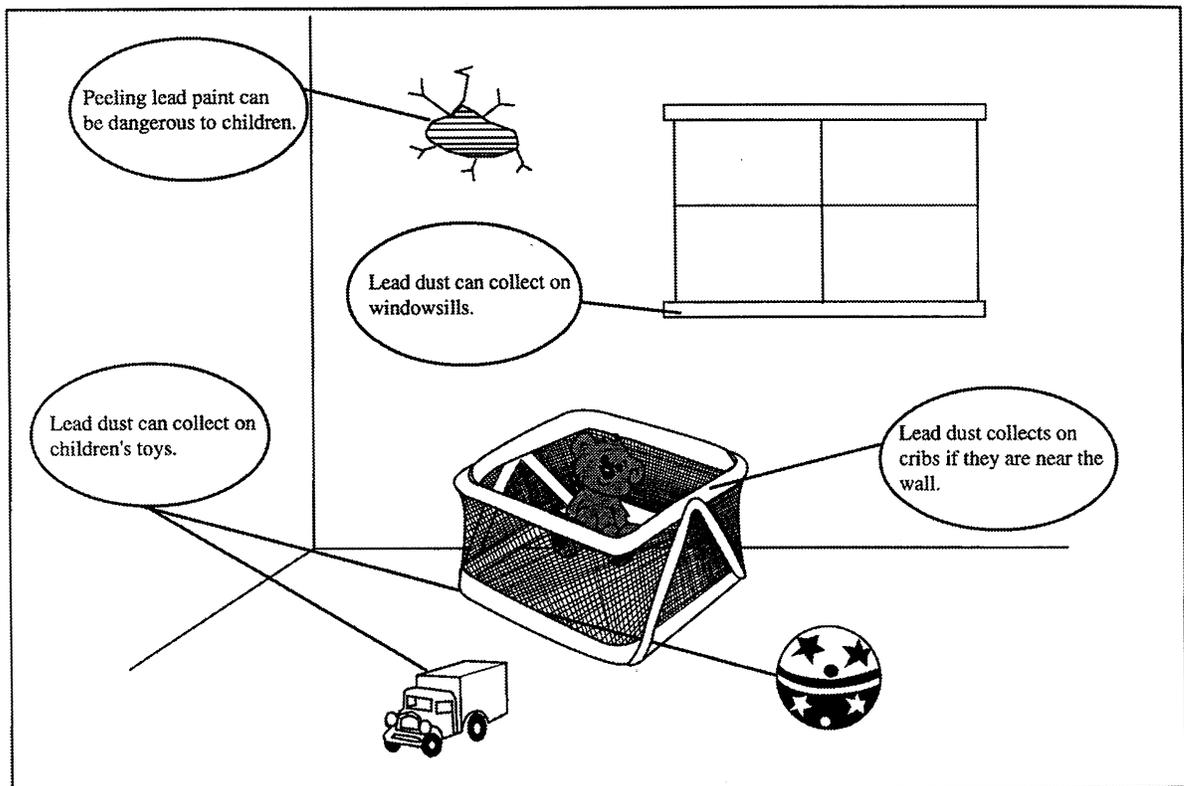
Doctor: I would guess that Alexi is old enough to easily get around the house. Does he get into everything?

Mrs. Borges: Sometimes. We live in an older house and it is very hard to make the house safe for Alexi.

Doctor: Has Alexi been tested for lead poisoning?

Mr. Borges: No. I don't think so. Why should he be tested for lead poisoning?

Doctor: Well, you said you lived in an older home. Many homes built before 1978 have paint with lead. Lead is dangerous to children because it can affect the brain. Children with lead in their blood may find it harder to learn and they may be more irritable than other children. Lead can also affect the blood, kidneys, and other parts of the body.



Mr. Borges: How does the lead get from the paint into my child?

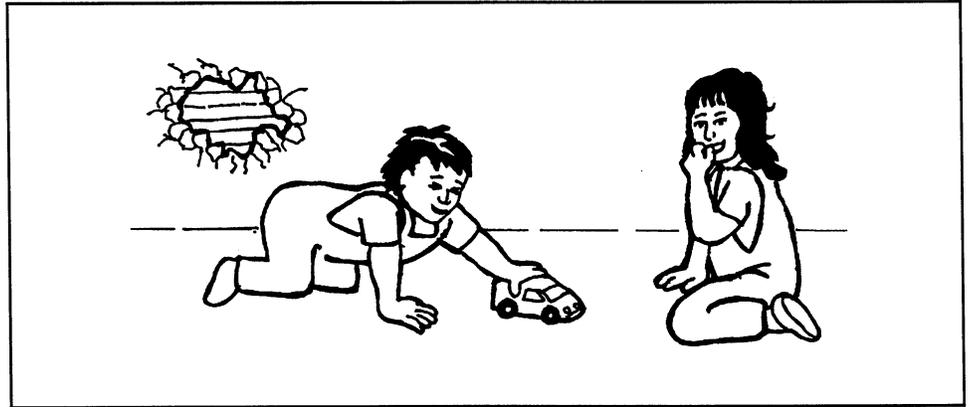
Doctor: Over many years, paint on windows, walls, and doors crumbles into household dust. This dust clings to toys, fingers, and other objects that children put into their mouths. This is the most common way that lead gets into your child. Children also get lead into their bodies by chewing on lead painted surfaces. Some young children eat paint that is peeling or chipping. It is normal for children to eat paint.

Mr. Borges: I don't understand. My son seems so healthy. How could he have lead poisoning?

Doctor: Even children who appear healthy may have high levels of lead in their blood. Most of the time you can't tell if your child has lead poisoning unless you have him tested.

Mrs. Borges: Can you test him today?

Doctor: Yes. The test is a blood test that involves taking blood from the arm. It takes only 10 minutes and the results should be ready within a week.



2

Vocabulary

Directions: Review the vocabulary words below and define each using simple English terms.

health clinic(s) (n.)
examining room(s) (n.)
sneeze (v.)
healthy (adj.)
lead poisoning (n.)
brain(s) (n.)
immunization(s) (n.)
blood (n.)
paint (n.)
dust (n.)
finger(s) (n.)
peeling (adj.)
window(s) (n.)

checkup(s) (n.)
recover (v.)
cough (v.)
lead (n.)
dangerous (adj.)
stethoscope (n.)
kidney(s) (n.)
body(ies) (n.)
crumble (v.)
cling (v.)
mouth(s) (n.)
test (v.)

3

Review and Discuss

Directions: Review “At the Doctor’s Office” and answer the following questions.

1. Why did Mr. and Mrs. Borges bring their son, Alexi, to the doctor? _____

2. Is Alexi sick? _____

3. What does the doctor tell the Borgeses? _____

4. Where do the Borgeses live? _____

5. Why should Alexi be tested for lead poisoning? _____

6. Why is lead dangerous for children? _____

7. How does lead get from the house paint into a child? _____

4

Act Out the Scene

Directions: Unlike the doctor described in “At the Doctor’s Office,” many doctors will not ask you about lead paint in your house. Therefore, you need to be prepared to ask your doctor the right questions. Using the information below, act out a scene between doctor and patient. Think about what you would say if you were in this situation.

Patient: You think your house contains lead paint. You want the doctor to test your child to make sure he or she does not have lead in his or her blood. What would you say to the doctor?

Doctor: What would you say to the patient?

5

Understanding the Test Results

Directions: Read or act out the following passage.

Mrs. Borges and Alexi return to the neighborhood health clinic one week later to get the results of the blood test. They are waiting in the examining room for the doctor when she walks through the door.

Doctor: Hello, Mrs. Borges. How are you?

Mrs. Borges: I’m fine, but I’m worried about the test results.

Doctor: Well, the test results are OK. Alexi has some lead in his blood. This means that somewhere he came into contact with lead.

Mrs. Borges: What will happen to Alexi? Will he become sick?

Doctor: Alexi’s lead level is not high, but children with low lead levels can have health problems and problems learning when they are older. However, if you keep your home and yard safe, I think Alexi will be fine. I’ll give you a list of recommendations for preventing lead poisoning. Bring Alexi to my office for another test in six months. Does Alexi have any brothers or sisters who should be tested?

Mrs. Borges: No. But I am pregnant. Should I be worried about lead?

Doctor: If you follow the same recommendations I’m making for Alexi, then you and your new child should be OK. I also recommend that you test your water to determine if it is a source of lead. If your water has lead in it, then you may want to consider using bottled or filtered water for drinking and cooking. It is important for Alexi and you, Mrs. Borges, to have lead-free water.

6

Vocabulary

Directions: Review the vocabulary words below and define each using simple English terms.

yard (*n.*)

current (*adj.*)

low (*adj.*)

mop(s) (*n.*)

dirt (*n.*)

wash (*v.*)

scatter (*v.*)

absorb (*v.*)

recommend (*v.*)

worry (*v.*)

high (*adj.*)

safe (*adj.*)

furniture (*n.*)

vacuum (*v.*)

wipe (*v.*)

nutritious (*adj.*)

empty (*adj.*)

stomach (*n.*)

7

Complete the Sentences

Directions: Review “Understanding the Test Results” and complete the sentences below.

1. Mrs. Borges is worried about _____

2. Most homes built before 1978 have _____

3. Alexi’s test results show that _____

4. Alexi should visit the doctor for another checkup in _____

5. Lead in the blood can cause _____

8 Review the Doctor's Report and Recommendations

Directions: Read and discuss the recommendations below.

Neighborhood Health Clinic
SUSAN JONES-SANTIAGO, M.D.

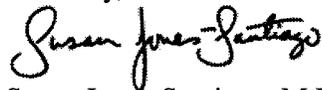
Dear Mr. and Mrs. Borges,

Your son, Alexi, has some lead in his blood. To prevent the lead level from becoming higher, I would recommend that you take these simple steps:

- √ Watch what your child puts into his mouth.
- √ Mop floors with a damp mop (using automatic dishwasher soap and water) and wipe down furniture and windowsills with a damp cloth to remove dust.
- √ Wash your child's hands before he eats.
- √ Frequently wash the objects that Alexi puts into his mouth.
- √ Vacuum rugs and carpets frequently, but do not vacuum hardwood floors because this activity scatters dust.
- √ Make sure Alexi eats regular nutritious meals, because more lead is absorbed on an empty stomach.
- √ Watch Alexi when he plays outside to make sure he does not eat dirt (which may have paint chips in it).

See you in six months.

Sincerely,

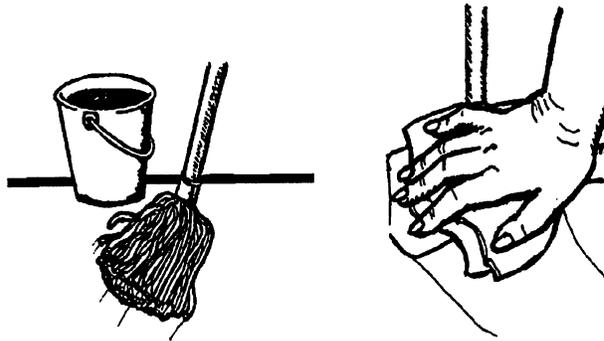


Susan Jones-Santiago, M.D.

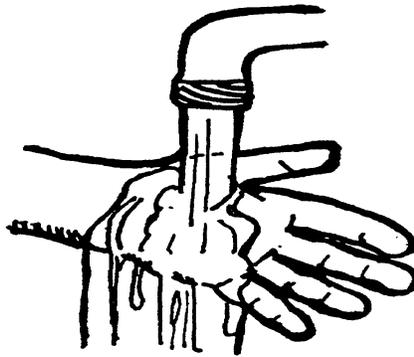
Watch what your child puts into his or her mouth.



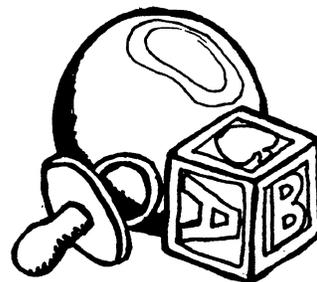
Mop floors and wipe down furniture and windowsills.



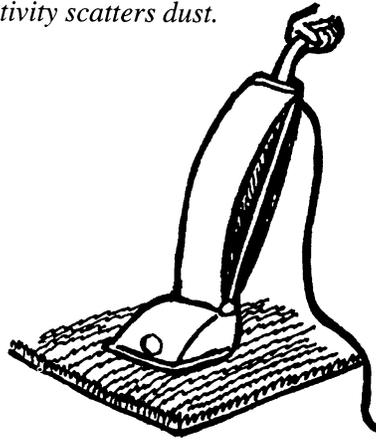
Wash your child's hands before he or she eats.



Wash objects that your child puts into his or her mouth.



Vacuum rugs and carpets frequently, but do not vacuum floors without rugs because this activity scatters dust.



Make sure that your child eats regular nutritious meals.



Make sure that your child does not eat dirt.



Note to Student: More information on preventing lead poisoning can be found in the units “Making Water Safe to Drink” and “Identifying Symptoms of Illness.”
