

Ways to Reduce Exposure to Lead and Arsenic and Protect Your Health in

Hayden and Winkelman, Arizona

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Background

In Hayden and Winkelman, there are high levels of arsenic and lead in the air, in tailings piles, and in soil in some non-residential locations. Also, lead was used in paint until 1978, so homes built before this date may have lead-based paint on inside or outside walls and surfaces.

This fact sheet describes how you and your family can be exposed to lead and arsenic, ways you can reduce exposure to lead and arsenic, and possible health effects of exposure.

How can people be exposed to lead and arsenic in the area?

- People can be exposed by breathing air that is contaminated with arsenic or lead.
- People may be exposed if they eat small amounts of contaminated soil, dust, or lead-based paint by accident. Young children are more at risk than adults because they play in areas where soil, dust, and paint may be found and then put toys and hands in their mouths.

Ways to reduce exposure to lead and arsenic

Keep dirt and dust from getting into your body by:

- Staying off mine and smelter waste (tailings piles).
- Staying away from arroyos and washes in Hayden, especially during rain storms.
- Staying away from railroad tracks in Hayden.
- Washing your hands and your children's hands often, especially before eating and after being outside.
- Taking off shoes before going into your house.
- Making sure your child does not have access to peeling paint or chew on surfaces painted with lead-based paint. Lead paint was used in many homes built before 1978.
- Wet-mopping floors and wet-wiping windowsills, window wells, counters and furniture every 2-3 weeks. Avoid dry dusting and sweeping because it spreads dust into the air.
- Washing dogs and other pets at least every 2-3 weeks.
- Washing things that children put in their mouths, such as pacifiers, bottles, and sippy-cups, especially if they come into contact with soil or household dust.
- Washing and peeling all fruits, vegetables, and root crops (such as potatoes).



Eating habits

- Give your family healthful meals rich in iron, calcium, zinc, and vitamin C to help stop lead and arsenic from going into your body through your stomach.
- Offer your children several small meals each day of a balanced diet suitable for age and growth. Eat several small balanced meals yourself each day.
- Meals low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol can help reduce the body's absorption of lead. However, children younger than 2 years of age need sufficient fat in their diet for optimal development of the nervous system.
 - » Infancy (0 to 12 months): Breast milk is highly recommended. For children who are not breastfed, iron-fortified formula is recommended. Low-iron [Fe] formula is not recommended.
 - » From age 12 to 24 months: give whole milk
 - » Older than 24 months: consider switching from whole milk to low-fat or skim milk

How can chemicals affect my body?

The health effects of any chemical – including lead and arsenic – depend on several things:

- How the chemical gets into your body
- How much of the chemical gets into your body
- How toxic the chemical is
- How your body eliminates the chemical
- How often and how long you have been exposed
- Your age and health status

What are the possible health effects of exposure to lead and arsenic?

Lead

Lead exposure can cause learning and behavior problems in children and many other health effects. Some of the effects of lead may never go away.

Lead in a child's body can:

- Slow down growth and development
- Damage hearing and speech
- Make it hard to pay attention and learn

Lead in a pregnant woman's body can:

- Increase the risk of miscarriage
- Cause the baby to be born too early or too small

Arsenic

Arsenic exposure can cause skin problems, stomachache and nausea. Arsenic exposure over many years also raises the risk of cancer of the bladder, lung, liver, and skin.

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