

Keeping Lead At Work...Preventing Take-Home Lead Exposure

Lead dust can be carried home on your clothes, shoes, skin and hair and could contaminate family vehicles, child car seats or home interiors. Children and pregnant women are especially vulnerable to health effects of lead exposure.

Careful what you bring to work:

- The following personal possessions may become contaminated at work: **your watch, glasses, car keys, cell phone, jewelry, other items in your pocket.** Please keep them at home or place in clean locker room before work. These are items that small children may want to play with or put in their mouths.
- The following items may become contaminated at work: water bottles, lunch bags, back packs. Consider bringing food, water or clothing in disposable bags/containers. If they are used at work they should be stored in a clean place at work and in a clean plastic bag in the car and at home.
- Baseball caps should be left in the car or clean locker room.
- Consider using disposable tissues vs. handkerchiefs.
- Keep your tobacco products in your clean locker, not in your pocket.

While at work:

- Follow the protocols for staying clean during work breaks.
- Protect your personal belongings that you go home with from lead contamination.
- Don't eat in work area, keep lunch items in the break room in designated areas.
- Use disposable water sources or what is provided at work.
- Do not go to car during work breaks.
- ALWAYS wash hands and face before eating, drinking, smoking.

At the end of your shift:

- Follow the protocols for cleaning up before leaving work.
- Do not wear any work clothes, shoes or other work gear home.
- Deposit work clothes in dirty locker room. If not laundered at work put dirty personal items (such as clothes, socks, underwear, headbands) in clean plastic bag to bring home.

- Shower, including washing hair, clean under your finger nails. Keep nails short. Put on clean street clothes and shoes.
- Before entering your car, put on second clean pair of shoes.

Safeguards at home:

- Enter from rear door (or the door closest to laundry) when coming home from work. Work boots must remain outside if worn home.
- If not already done, remove work clothes and shower, including washing the hair, BEFORE playing with children.
- Keep any clothes worn at work in plastic bag. Empty your work clothes from the plastic bag directly into the washer, dispose of plastic bag after use.
- Wash any work clothes separate from your other clothes or family clothes. Run the washer through one rinse cycle before using it again.
- Periodically clean work vehicle interior and carpets in your home using wet cleaning methods for hard surfaces and a vacuum with a “HEPA” or allergy filter for soft surfaces and upholstery.
- If you think your home or vehicle may be contaminated with lead have your family tested for lead in their blood.
- If possible, do not transport children to school and daycare in vehicle driven to work.

For more information about preventing take-home lead exposure please contact the Children’s Environmental Health Branch at 919-707-5950 or the Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch at 919-790-5900.



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