

Symptoms Of Lead Poisoning are Not Always Obvious

- Symptoms are easily misinterpreted by medical personnel, thus delaying effective treatment and increasing the likelihood of permanent physical and mental damage.
- Only sure way to determine lead poisoning is to take a blood lead level (BLL) test.

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Lead poisoning does not always have obvious symptoms.

- The symptoms of lead poisoning are often non-specific, and are frequently attributed to other causes.
- Specific symptoms that people with lead exposure sometimes complain of include:
 - Headache
 - Stomach ache
 - Irritability
 - Fatigue
 - Loss of appetite
 - Joint and/or muscle pain
- Because many symptoms are non-specific or similar to flu symptoms, parents may not be alerted to get immediate medical attention for their children. This is critical for young children. The longer a young child stays untreated, the higher the risk of permanent brain damage.
- Workers with an occupational exposure to lead need to inform their doctors in order to give them all the background needed for an adequate evaluation of symptoms as possibly related to lead exposure.
- The best way to determine if lead is present in the body is by testing blood.
- The amount of lead in blood is measured in micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g/dl}$) of the blood, a very small unit of measurement. A microgram is one millionth of a gram. That is like one penny out of \$10,000. For reference, a standard size paper clip weighs about one gram, or one million times more than a microgram. A microgram is a very small amount of lead. Remember how small this amount of lead is as it applies to dust cleanup when we get to **Module 4: Contain Dust During Work, Module 5: During the Work, and Module 6: Cleaning Activities and Checking Your Work.**