

If you're 60 or over, call your local legal aid office:

Eastern CT	800-413-7796	Western CT	800-413-7797
Hartford Area	860-541-5000	Bridgeport Area	800-809-4434
Stamford Area	800-541-8909	New Haven Area	203-946-4811

If you're under 60, call SLS for help:



Statewide Legal Services  
1-800-453-3320  
860-344-0380

Search our website for help:



[www.ctlawhelp.org](http://www.ctlawhelp.org)

## HOUSING

## LEGAL SERVICES

SELF-HELP SERIES

# Are you worried about lead poisoning?

March 2024



### We offer free legal help in many areas, including

- welfare,
- SNAP (food stamps),
- divorce,
- child support,
- domestic violence,
- bankruptcy,
- special education,
- nursing home care,
- health insurance,
- eviction,
- foreclosure,
- and more.

*See the reverse side for more about legal services.*

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Search our website for help:



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If you're over 60, call your local legal aid office.

**Connecticut Legal Services**

[www.ctlegal.org](http://www.ctlegal.org)

**Bridgeport**

1000 Lafayette Blvd 203-336-3851  
Suite 950

**New Britain**

16 Main Street 860-225-8678

**New London**

125 Eugene O'Neill Dr.  
Suite 120 860-447-0323

**Stamford**

1177 Summer Street 203-348-9216

**Waterbury**

85 Central Avenue 203-756-8074

**Willimantic**

1125 Main Street 860-456-1761

**Greater Hartford Legal Aid**

[www.ghla.org](http://www.ghla.org)

999 Asylum Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
860-541-5000

**New Haven Legal Assistance Association**

[www.nhlegal.org](http://www.nhlegal.org)

205 Orange Street  
New Haven, CT 06510  
203-946-4811

**Consumer Law Project for Elders**

Free legal assistance to people 60 and over throughout Connecticut who have money/debt problems.

1-800-296-1467

*Are you worried about lead poisoning?*

When should my child be tested for lead?.....	3
How do I understand the results of my child's lead test? .....	3
When will my home be inspected if my child tests high for lead? .....	4
What if there are lead problems in my home? .....	6
Who can I contact if I am having problems with lead inspection or abatement? .....	7
Who is allowed to remove lead hazards in a home?.....	8
Where can I get medical advice or help for my child in school? .....	8-9

*This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut. The information in this booklet is based on laws in Connecticut as of 3/2024. We hope that the information is helpful. It is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.*

If you live in a home that was built before 1978, it is critical that you know how to protect your child from lead paint poisoning. If your child gets lead paint or dust in their mouth, they can get lead paint poisoning, which can cause a lower IQ, behavioral problems, learning disabilities, and more. No amount of lead is safe for the body, and the damage it causes cannot always be fixed.

### ***When should my child be tested for lead?***

In Connecticut, children between 9 months and 35 months old must be tested for lead poisoning at least once each year. Your child should be tested for lead **at least 2 times before they turn 3 years old**. If your child has never been tested for lead, talk to their doctor.

Your child's doctor will first perform a finger or heel-prick test. These tests are fast but may capture any lead dust on the surface of the skin, leading to a higher result. If the finger-prick test shows an elevated lead-blood level, a venous blood draw will be performed to confirm the result. This requires blood to be drawn from a vein with a needle. The results for the venous test may take a few days. If your child's venous blood results are elevated, those results will be reported to the local health department and the State Department of Public Health.

Your health insurance will pay for lead testing. If your child is eligible for or enrolled in HUSKY Health, HUSKY will pay for the tests.

### ***How do I understand the results of my child's lead test?***

#### **Protecting Your Child from Lead Poisoning**

A blood lead level of 3.5 mg/dL or higher is elevated and it means your child is being exposed to high levels of lead. If you live in a home built before 1978 or your child spends time in an older home, watch your child closely to make sure they are not swallowing or inhaling dangerous lead paint chips or dust. Clean all toys and inside surfaces weekly using wet cleaning methods. Wash your child's hands often, especially before they eat.

Your child's doctor must recommend treatment for lead and give you information about lead poisoning in your native language.

### Retesting

If a child has lead in their blood, their blood level must be retested as follows:

- **Between 3.9 mg/dL and 9.9 mg/dL**, the child's blood must be retested within 3 months.
- **Between 10 mg/dL and 19.9 mg/dL**, the child's blood must be retested within 1 month.
- **Between 20 mg/dL and 44.9 mg/dL**, the child's blood must be retested within 2 weeks or sooner.
- **45 mg/dL or higher**, the child may need to be hospitalized.

**Remember:** Some doctors will test more often if your child is at risk of lead poisoning. You can ask your doctor if they will schedule more frequent tests.

### *Will my home be inspected for lead?*

Your local health department is required to inspect your home if any of these are true:

- Your child's blood lead level is **20 mg/dL or more**. Keep in mind that there are some situations that require inspections at levels lower than 20. For example, in if the child lives in public housing or resides in the city of New Haven, homes are inspected if a child tests at **5 or more**.
- Your child had two blood tests that were taken more than 3 months apart, and the results were **between 15 and 19**. For example, if your child's blood level is 16 on September 1 and it is 17 on December 15, the local health department must inspect your home.
- You live in a multi-family building, you have a child under age 6, and another child in the building has a high blood lead level.

### ***Where can I get medical advice for my child?***

If your child has been lead poisoned, there are two regional treatment centers in Connecticut:

#### **Yale New Haven Regional Treatment Center**

203-688-2195  
1 Park Street  
New Haven, CT 06510

#### **Hartford Regional Lead Treatment Center**

860-547-0979  
114 Woodland Street  
Hartford, CT 06105

### ***How can I get help for my child in school?***

Children who suffer from lead poisoning may need additional help in school. In Connecticut, problems from lead poisoning count as a disability and may allow your child to be placed in a special education program.

If you think your child is not learning or growing as expected, you can contact the Child Find Project for more information. Under Child Find, states and schools districts must find and evaluate all children who need special education services. To contact Child Find, call 1-800-445-2722.

### ***More resources for lead poisoning***

- United Way: Dial 2-1-1 or go to <https://www.211ct.org/>
- Connecticut Birth-to-Three: <http://www.birth23.org>
- Child Development Info Line: 1-800-505-7000
- Children's Medical Center's Healthy Homes Program: 860-837-4241

The local health department will test paint, soil, dust, and water for lead. They may also test things like cultural medicines from outside the U.S.

The health department will ask you questions about your home, your job, and your child's habits. **It is important to answer their questions fully** to help them find out where the lead is coming from.

### **Scheduling inspections**

Your doctor will send your child's blood level results to your local health department. The health department must contact you within **5 business days** to schedule the inspection. They should finish the inspection within **30 business days** of when they were told about the test results.

### ***What if I live in Section 8 or federal public housing?***

Federal law requires that housing authorities inspect the homes of any child with a lead blood level of **5 mg/dL or more**. If you live in Section 8 or federal public housing, contact your housing authority **right away** if your child has a lead blood level of **5 mg/dL or more**. If your home is not inspected in a reasonable time period, contact the HUD office in Hartford (860-240-4800) or Boston (617-994-8200).

### ***What if there is lead paint in my home?***

If the inspectors find lead problems inside or outside your home, the owner or landlord must have a licensed company come in and fix the lead problems. This is called **abatement**. **If another child in your building has lead poisoning** and an inspection finds *defective surfaces* in your home, the owner or landlord must fix your home as well. *Defective surfaces* are areas with peeling or flaking paint, or surfaces that a child could chew on or eat lead paint from. Windows and doors can also cause lead dust when the lead-painted surfaces rub against each other.

### ***How will they fix the lead problems in my home?***

The local health department will issue a *lead abatement order*. This order says the homeowner or landlord must create a *lead abatement plan* to get rid of the lead problems in the home. The local health department must approve the plan. This plan will include start and end dates.

**Remember:** You can ask for a copy of the lead abatement plan from the owner of the building. If you have any questions about it, talk to your local health department. If abatement is not done by the end date on the lead abatement plan, contact your local health department.

Abatement must begin **within 45 working days** of the inspection results if your child has lead poisoning. After the abatement is done, the local director of health must re-inspect the home within **10 business days** and write a *post-abatement inspection report* once they find there are no lead hazards left in the home.

**Remember:** If the abatement is very difficult or your child's blood lead level is too high, you may be asked to move for a short time. The owner of the home must try to help with relocation. They may put you in a hotel for a few days or you can temporarily move to a relative's home. The local health department will need to check that your new home does not have lead as well.

### ***Who can I contact if I am having problems with lead inspection or abatement?***

First, contact your local health department. You can find the contact information for your local health department at [www.ctlawhelp.org/leadpaint](http://www.ctlawhelp.org/leadpaint).

- Your local health department will be able to answer your questions about lead dangers, treatment, licensed companies, money for abatement, and more.
- If you are having a problem with your landlord or the owner of the building, you can also speak to your local health district official.

Second, contact the State of Connecticut's Department of Public Health. You can contact their Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control program at 860-509-7299. You can also visit the Department of Public Health websites at [www.ct.gov/preventlead](http://www.ct.gov/preventlead) or [www.ct.gov/plomo](http://www.ct.gov/plomo).

### ***Where can I get legal help?***

If you are unable to get help from your local health department or the Department of Public Health, contact Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.

### ***Who can remove lead hazards in a home?***

In Connecticut, only licensed contractors are allowed to remove lead in a home (this is called *abatement*). The Department of Public Health keeps a list of licensed abatement contractors. Contact your local health department if the work on your home is not being done by a licensed lead abatement contractor.

1. Go to: <https://www.elicense.ct.gov/Lookup/GenerateRoster.aspx>
2. Scroll down, click on *Lead Consulting and Abatement Professionals*, and select *Lead Abatement Contractors*.
3. Go to the bottom and click *Continue*.
4. Click *Download*.

If you are unable to get help from your local health department, contact Statewide Legal Services at 1-800-453-3320.