



# Healthy Ways to Family Fitness

issue 10

A NEWSLETTER PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Lead Poisoning Prevention

### Prevent lead poisoning with these tips:

- Test your home for lead. Call 1-800-776-2706 (Maryland Department of the Environment).
- Never use hot water from the tap for drinking, cooking or making baby formula.
- Teach children to wash their hands and faces regularly.
- Watch where your child plays and what goes in your baby's mouth. Keep toys clean.
- Don't give children costume jewelry especially with dull metallic parts or fake pearls.
- If family members work with lead, they should change their shoes and clothes and shower immediately when they get home.
- Feed your child a healthy diet rich in iron, calcium and vitamin C. Do not use imported pottery to serve or store food.
- Avoid home remedies unless your doctor says it is okay.
- Don't put cosmetics on babies.
- Have your child tested for lead in his/her blood.

**More information about preventing lead poisoning:**  
**Anne Arundel County Department of Health,**  
**410-222-7003, [www.aahealth.org](http://www.aahealth.org)**

### What is lead poisoning?

Lead is a toxic substance. It can cause learning, hearing and behavioral problems and can harm the brain, kidneys and other organs. Children with lead poisoning do not always look or act sick. A blood test is the only way to know for sure if a child has lead poisoning.



### How are children exposed to lead?

Lead dust is the major cause of lead poisoning. The main source of lead dust is deteriorating lead paint, which was often used in homes built before 1978. Lead dust the size of a grain of salt can cause a high blood lead level. A child can be exposed to lead dust while crawling, touching walls or playing with toys. Younger children who put their hands or toys in their mouths are at a higher risk. Lead can also be found in water, soil, imported pottery, brass containers, foreign/antique teakettles, folk medicines or cosmetics from other countries, stained glass artwork, large batteries, bullets and fishing weights.

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# Safe Sleep for Babies

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death of an infant. It is the third-leading cause of death in babies less than one year old. To lower the risk of SIDS and suffocation use these tips:

- Always put the baby on his or her back to sleep or nap.
- Don't let people smoke in your home or around the baby.
- Always put the baby to sleep alone in a safe crib. Do not let baby sleep with you or other people in a bed, sofa or other place.
- Use a firm mattress that fits tightly into the crib and is covered by a well-fitting crib sheet. A 12-ounce soda can should not fit between the crib rails.
- Don't put fluffy, loose bedding, soft toys or plastic bags in the baby's crib. Bumper pads aren't needed but, if used, should be thin, firm and securely attached to the rails.
- Don't let the baby get too hot. Try using a one-piece sleeper and keep a comfortable room temperature.
- Try using a pacifier when putting baby to sleep. If breastfeeding, wait until the baby is one month old.



# Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaken Baby Syndrome occurs when a baby is shaken, usually when a caregiver is frustrated and angry with the baby's crying. Shaking causes the blood vessels to the brain to tear and bleed, causing brain damage.

Babies may cry more than 3 hours a day. Make sure the baby is not wet, y, lonely, too hot or too cold. If the baby is still crying, try these tips:

- Hold, rock, walk or dance with the baby.
- Sing or talk to the baby.
- Reduce the noise and light.
- Offer the baby a pacifier or toy.
- Take a deep breath and count to ten. Call someone to help.
- If you think the baby is sick, call your health care provider.

**Never, never shake a baby.**

For more information about safe sleep, Shaken Baby Syndrome or other parenting questions or concerns, call The Family Tree Tot's Line for Anne Arundel County at 1-877-817-TOTS (8687). **The Tot's Line is a helpline offering advice and referrals to County services for pregnant women, parents and caregivers of children from birth to five years of age.**

