WASH WITH CARE.

How to protect your family when laundering clothes that may be contaminated with lead.



LEAD POISONING IS PREVENTABLE. When laundering clothes and other linens that might be contaminated with lead, here are 7 things you can do to minimize your exposure to lead and reduce the risk of contaminating other laundry.

1

BAG IT

Transport and keep lead-contaminated clothes in a sealed bag until they can be laundered.

2

WASH IT SEPARATELY

Always launder clothes that may be contaminated with lead separately from general household laundry.

3

HANDLE WITH CARE

Don't shake out lead-contaminated clothes before laundering them. Gently empty the bag directly into the washing machine to avoid releasing fine dust into the air. After handling the bag, wash your hands with soap and water before touching anything else.

4

USE DETERGENT WITH SURFACTANTS, HOT WATER, AND A HEAVY-DUTY CYCLE

Use a detergent that is specifically formulated to remove lead (better) or a conventional laundry detergent. Avoid using laundry detergents that are surfactant-free.

5

RINSE CLOTHES BEFORE AND AFTER WASHING

Run an extra rinse cycle before and after the laundry cycle to flush out loosened lead residue from the clothes.

6

RUN AN EMPTY LOAD BEFORE WASHING GENERAL HOUSEHOLD LAUNDRY

Once the washer is empty, run an additional cycle with detergent (better) or an extra rinse cycle before laundering general household laundry. Wipe down laundry room surfaces and washing machine controls with disposable wet cleaning materials.

7

AIR DRY

Air dry clothes by hanging them or laying them flat to dry. If you need to use a dryer, wipe down the inside of the dryer with a mixture of white vinegar and water when the load is done.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HEAVILY CONTAMINATED LAUNDRY

HEAVILY CONTAMINATED LAUNDRY

It is best to use an industrial or commercial laundry service to launder clothes heavily contaminated with lead. Be sure to first ask if they offer this service and tell them that your clothes are contaminated with lead.

If this service is not available in your community:

USE A DETERGENT FORMULATED FOR LEAD

There are specialized laundry detergents formulated to remove lead and other metal dust from clothing. These detergents may be available from retailers in your community and are available for purchase online. Be sure to select the correct formula for the level of lead contamination in your laundry.

ASK LOCAL LAUNDROMATS ABOUT "DIGGER" MACHINES

If you live or work in a community with a laundromat that has "digger" machines –washing machines designated for miners to launder heavily contaminated clothing – it is better to use these machines instead of your household washing machine when laundering clothes with heavy lead contamination.

INSTALL A SECOND WASHING MACHINE AT HOME

If you need to routinely launder clothes with heavy lead contamination at home, consider installing a separate dedicated washing machine for this type of laundry.







DON'T LET LEAD TRAVEL HOME ON YOUR WORK CLOTHES

If you work with lead and your employer provides laundry services, use this instead of laundering your work clothes at home.

Clothes with heavy contamination are best laundered in an industrial laundering facility that is experienced in removing lead dust and other contaminants.

For more information on how to protect your family from lead, visit leadfreekids.mt.gov.

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