

Sun Exposure Prevention

Sunlight contains UV-B rays which have greater intensity in summer, at midday, locations close to the equator and at high altitudes.



Tanning occurs as a protective response to sun exposure. Approximately 80% of lifetime sun exposure occurs before 18 years of age! High exposure to UV-B light during childhood is sufficient to cause sunburn which increases the risk of melanoma (form of skin cancer).

- Keep infants <6 months out of direct sunlight
- Avoid scheduling children's activities between 10 AM and 4 PM to minimize sun exposure
- Clothes (pants/long sleeve shirts) offer simple forms of sun protection
- Sunscreen reduces ray intensity effecting the skin, although no data shows sunscreen prevents melanoma!
- It is recommend to continue using SPF 15 as part of a sun avoidance program.

The exposures discussed included lead, mold, cigarette smoke and sunlight which can lead to problems in children such as learning disabilities, increase in allergies, asthma/lung disease, and increased chance to develop skin cancer.

What new changes or implementations will you make in and outside of your home to improve your child's health?

Remember to always be aware and discuss any questions or concerns about environmental exposures with your child's pediatrician at their next visit.



Exposure Prevention Awareness

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Environmental Health Facts and Resources

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY CHILD FROM ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS?



UF | Department of Pediatrics

Lead Exposure



Lead is one of the most serious environmental problems for children. Your child can develop lead poisoning if he/she swallows



lead dust, breathes lead vapors, eats soil, or paint chips that contains lead.

First, assess your home for risk exposure since lead is most commonly found in

paint prior to 1978, hobby materials such as paints, fishing weights and buckshot, imported ceramic dishes, old painted toys/cribs and tap water from homes with old lead solder pipes.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Clean painted areas and cover peeling/flaking locations with a fresh coat of paint
- Check with local health department to find out if local water supply contains lead
- Never live in an old house during renovation
- Wash your child's hands, toys and pacifiers

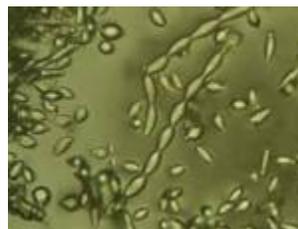
Your child may have high lead levels and not look sick. Parents should inform their child's pediatrician about exposures to evaluate blood lead level.

Mold Exposure

Mold grows indoors /outdoors and is seen as discolored patchy growth on walls, furniture or damp areas with an earthy musty odor which predisposes children to develop allergies, asthma and respiratory conditions.

Mold grows almost everywhere and can be found in any part of a home such as:

- Damp Basements
- Closets and carpeting
- Showers/Tubs
- Refrigerators
- Air conditioners
- Garbage pails
- Mattresses



What you can do ?

1. Use cool mist humidifiers or vaporizers when children have colds or air is dry during winter season (remember to always keep surfaces in the home dry!)
2. Bathrooms and basements should not be carpeted. Remember, wet carpets that can not be dried must be thrown away!
3. Children with allergies and asthma may use air cleaners to decrease the concentrations of mold spores in the air.

Smoking Exposure

A recent study indicated that 43% of children 2 months to 11 years of age live in homes with at least one smoker. Tobacco smoke is composed of gases and small particles containing over 4000 different chemical compounds.

Passive (secondhand) smoking has a very harmful effect on children's health leading to higher rates of respiratory infections, ear infections and more frequent asthma attacks.

Your child may be exposed to chemicals in secondhand smoke

known to cause cancer such as benzene, chromium, formaldehyde, cyanide and carbon monoxide! Prevent your child's exposure at home, daycare, outdoor smoking areas, in cars, anywhere people smoke.



Is second hand smoke more harmful to children? ... YES!

- Children breath in more air than adults for their size.
- As children grow taller they become more sensitive to second hand smoke which is dangerous to their developing lungs and immune system.

Resources:

U.S. Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Smoker Helpline (1-800-NO-BUTTS)

Smoke free America www.smokefree.gov