

Keeping Your Child Safe from Lead and Other Heavy Metals in Baby Foods



A recent congressional report found heavy metals, including lead, arsenic, cadmium, and mercury, in baby foods and baby juices. Heavy metals are especially dangerous for young children. This news can leave parents with a lot of questions. Here is more information and tips for parents to keep their children safe.

What can I do?

- Feed your child healthy meals and snacks and not too much of one thing.
- Limit higher risk foods for heavy metal exposure and make safer choices (see list below).
- Wash hands often, especially before eating. Use lead-safe dishware and cold tap water for drinking, cooking, and baby formula.
- **If you think your child may have been exposed to lead, ask your child's doctor about a blood lead test.**

Why is this important?

- There is no known safe level of lead in the body, especially for children.
- Lead can make it hard for children to learn, pay attention, and behave.
- Lead adds up in the body over time, so it is important to reduce lead exposure from all sources.

Tips for making safer food choices:

Cereal, snacks, & teething foods

Foods containing rice or rice flour can contain arsenic. Teething biscuits can contain lead, arsenic, and cadmium.

Instead, try these rice-free foods and healthy snacks: **oatmeal, quinoa, multi-grain cereal, fruit, yogurt, cheese, and eggs.**

For teething pain, try **frozen banana** slices, cold **peeled cucumber**, or a clean cold wet washcloth or spoon (watch for choking).



Fruits & vegetables

Veggies that grow underground, like carrots and sweet potatoes, are a good source of nutrients, but can contain lead and cadmium.

Mix it up! Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables from every color of the rainbow during the week.



Drinks

Juice, especially apple, pear, and grape, can contain lead and arsenic.

Water and **milk** are safer drink options.¹ You can also choose whole or pureed fruit.



Where can I get more information?

- Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch – cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CLPPB
- Healthy Babies Bright Futures – hbbf.org
- Healthy Children.Org – HealthyChildren.org
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Response to Questions About Levels of Toxic Elements in Baby Food, Following Congressional Report – fda.gov/food/news-events-cfsan/cfsan-constituent-updates

¹ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastmilk or formula for the first year of life.

