

How can I reduce my exposure to lead from dishes?

- Do not use dishes that contain or may contain lead
- Do not use any dishes with cracked or damaged glaze that may contain lead
- Do not heat food in dishes that contain or may contain lead
- Do not store food in dishes that contain or may contain lead
- Do not put highly acidic foods or liquids in dishes that contain or may contain lead. Acidic foods include citrus fruits, sodas, alcoholic beverages, tomatoes, soy sauce, salad dressings, coffee, or tea.

What should I do with lead containing dishes?

- Discontinue using them
- Discard them in the trash
- Store them in an area where they are not likely to be used
- Limit their use to special occasions and hand wash only
- Do not donate them to charities - this just passes the problem to another family

**Childhood Lead Poisoning
Prevention Program
799 N. Highland Ave
PO Box 686 Winston-Salem, NC
27101**

336-703-3174

**[www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/
EnvironmentalHealth/Lead](http://www.forsyth.cc/PublicHealth/EnvironmentalHealth/Lead)**

Additional information may be found at:

Consumer Product Safety Commission
<http://www.cpsc.gov>

National Lead Information Center
1-800-424-LEAD (1-800-424-5323)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>



Forsyth County
Department of Public Health



**Childhood Lead
Poisoning Prevention**
Forsyth County

Is There Lead In Your Dishes?



**Forsyth County Department
of Public Health**
336-703-3174

Should I worry about lead in my dishes?

Lead can be in the glaze or decoration that covers the surface of some ceramic dishes and can get into food or drink that is prepared, stored, or served in the dishes. Lead is a toxic substance that can affect people of any age. It is especially harmful to children, pregnant women and unborn babies. Lead accumulates in your body, so even small amounts can pose a health risk over time.



Why is lead still used in ceramic dishes?

Lead has long been used both in glazes and in decorations for ceramic ware. When used in glazes, lead gives a smooth, glasslike finish that allows bright colors and decorative patterns underneath to show through. It provides strength and keeps moisture from penetrating into the dish. When used in decorations, lead is often associated with rich or intense colors.

How does lead get from dishes into the body?

Lead can be released from the glaze or decoration on the surface of the dish and pass into food or drink in the dish. This is called "leaching." When you eat the food, the lead gets into your body. The amount of lead that leaches from a dish depends on the amount of lead in the dish, the type of glaze or decoration on the dish, the use of the dish, type of food in the dish, and length of time the food is left or stored in the dish.

What should I look for?

- Traditional glazed terra cotta (clay) dishes made in Latin American countries
- Fine china or porcelain
- Lead crystal
- Traditionally decorated dishes used in some Asian communities
- Homemade and hand-crafted pottery or ceramics
- Older or no-longer available for purchase (Antiques)
- Dishes purchased in a small retail outlet



Are there any laws against selling dishes containing lead?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulates the sale of dishes that contain lead. Dishes exceeding the FDA levels cannot be sold legally in the U.S.

The only way to determine if dishes have lead is to have them tested.

Is it safe to use lead crystal?

- Only for short amounts of time
- Do not store food or alcohol in leaded crystal
- The longer food or drink is in leaded crystal the more lead can be absorbed



Can dishes with lead be washed in the dishwasher?

Dishwashers can damage the glazed surface and make it more likely for lead to leach into food and drinks the next time the dishes are used.