

LEAD IN CERAMIC WARE



Studies show that certain ceramic ware such as **traditional pottery and decorative foodware** may contain lead. Lead particles in ceramic ware, especially degrading, cracked items, may be released into food or drinks. Lead is toxic and can accumulate in the body causing serious long term health effects.

What is lead and what are the health risk associated with it?

Lead is a **metal** that is widely used in modern society, but is also associated with harmful health effects. Children are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure, as well as to the associated health effects. Lead exposure in children may cause:



**LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
AND POOR SCHOOL
PERFORMANCE**



**SHORTENED
CONCENTRATION
SPANS**



BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS



**DELAYED BODY GROWTH
AND DEVELOPMENT**

Lead exposure in adults is linked to:



**HEADACHES, MEMORY
LOSS, IRRITABILITY,
MUSCLE WEAKNESS**



**HIGH BLOOD
PRESSURE AND
CARDIAC DISEASE**



KIDNEY DAMAGE



**REDUCED
SPERM COUNT**



**PREGNANCY
COMPLICATIONS**

There is no measurable amount of lead in the blood that is considered safe.

Why is lead added to ceramic ware?

Lead may be added to ceramic ware to fix the pigments used or to speed up the drying process.

How may lead be released from ceramic ware?

Lead particles are released from glazed or decorated ceramic ware into food or drink. This process is known as leaching. Several factors may increase the rate of leaching of lead from ceramic ware, including the level of acidity, the duration of storage of food or drinks and temperature.

What should I look out for?

Be wary of the following when using ceramic ware for preparing, serving, heating and storage of foods and drinks:

1

TRADITIONAL OR HANDMADE CERAMIC WARE WITH AN IRREGULAR SHAPE

2

ANTIQUE CERAMIC WARE

3

BRIGHTLY-COLOURED AND HIGHLY DECORATED CERAMIC WARE ON THE INSIDE SURFACE

4

OLD, WORN, CHIPPED, OR CRACKED CERAMIC WARE

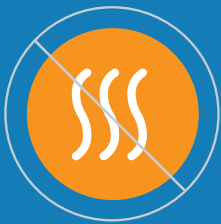
5

CERAMIC WARE PURCHASED FROM STREET VENDORS OR FLEA MARKETS

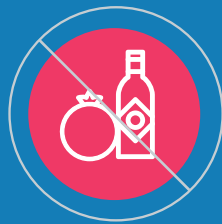
6

CERAMIC WARE THAT IS LABELED FOR USE ONLY AS DECORATIVE ITEMS

What can I do to reduce exposure to lead from ceramic ware?



DO NOT HEAT FOOD OR DRINKS in ceramic ware that may contain lead



DO NOT PLACE OR STORE HIGHLY ACIDIC FOOD OR DRINKS such as fruits, soy sauce, vinegar, salad dressing, soft drinks, alcohol, coffee, tea, lemon or pineapple juice in ceramic ware



DO NOT USE CERAMIC WARE with worn or cracked glazes for food or drinks



DISHWASHERS MAY DAMAGE THE GLAZED SURFACE OF CERAMIC WARE which makes lead more likely to leach into food and drinks.

BE AWARE THAT NO AMOUNT OF WASHING OR BOILING OF THE CERAMIC WARE WILL ELIMINATE THE LEAD.

Where can I find more information about lead exposure and poisoning?

<https://www.samrc.ac.za/intramural-research-units/EnvironmentHealth-resource-materials>.