



# Prescriptions for PREVENTION



Guidance from the Western States  
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

## Soil



### Did you know?

Children can be exposed to contaminated soil through storm runoff, pesticides and fertilizers, floods and other natural disasters, lead chips and dust, the improper disposal of hazardous chemicals, and through industrial processes. They can be exposed in three different ways; inhaling soil dust, touching or swallowing soil and eating food that has been grown in contaminated soil.



### Do

- ✓ **Leave shoes at the door** to prevent tracking in contaminated soil. Doormats can also help reduce the dust in the home.
- ✓ **Wash hands thoroughly** with warm water and soap after gardening or playing in dirt.
- ✓ **Get your soil tested** if your city has a testing program:
  - ✓ Refer to [EPA's Safer Gardening Guide](#);
  - ✓ Use a thick layer of mulch, compost and landscape fabric in home gardens to separate old, contaminated soil, from new soil;
  - ✓ Consider raised beds with 6" of new soil if you have contaminated soil, live near factories or old buildings or have a home built before 1978;
  - ✓ If possible, test newly purchased soil.
- ✓ **Rinse produce with running water** prior to eating. When possible, buy organic food.



### Don't

- ✗ Don't let your child play in soil that you know is contaminated.
- ✗ Don't grow produce near old buildings or near older wood structures or play equipment treated with CCA preservatives.
- ✗ Don't apply synthetic pesticides and fertilizers to your crops.
- ✗ Don't visit or spend extended amounts of time on contaminated lands.
  - If this does occur, take a shower soon after you arrive back home;
  - If possible, remove contaminated clothes and wash them separately from your other clothes using hot water.
- ✗ Don't let dirt and dust accumulate! Clean your home frequently:
  - Use wet microfiber mops and cloths on commonly used spaces;
  - Use a vacuum that has a high efficiency (HEPA) filter.



For more information, scan the code or visit  
<https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/projects/prescriptions-for-prevention-exposure-sources/>