



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, floods, wildfires and other natural disasters, pesticides and fertilizers, lead chips and dust, 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 dust in the home.
- Wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap after touching dirt.
- Get 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 contaminated soil.
- 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 contaminated lands.
 - If this occurs, remove contaminated clothes, preferably before entering your car, and wash them separately from your other clothes using hot water;
 - Take a shower soon after you return home.
- 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/curriculum-tools/prescriptions-for-prevention/>

Material developed in partnership with the Environmental Research and Translation for Health (EaRTH) Center: <https://earth.ucsf.edu>