



## YOUR HOME – PAINT

**How do you prevent lead poisoning from paintwork? Lead content in painted surfaces is dangerous. Here are some precautions to take to ensure you and your family are safe.**

We sometimes have a ‘do it and forget’ approach to home maintenance – if it doesn’t look extremely worn or isn’t in desperate need of repair, we simply forget about it.

High lead content in paintwork is common, particularly those painted pre-1970 and it can lead to severe health problems. Lead is absorbed by the body through ingestion and inhalation (not through the skin).

So even if your paintwork looks like it’s in pretty good nick for its age, there are some precautions you should take to ensure you are not unknowingly living in a harmful environment.

### THE DANGER OF LEAD

Lead is dangerous, especially to children from conception to four years of age, as it can interfere with their neurological development.

Old flaky lead paint surfaces are particularly dangerous as children may lick or swallow the flakes, which have a sweet taste.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT LEAD POISONING FROM PAINTED SURFACES

If the old paint surface is not flaking or crumbling, it is recommended that you paint over it to encapsulate the old paint. Lightly wet-sandpaper the surface first, carefully disposing of contaminated water.

If removing the paint, don’t use methods that generate dust (i.e. don’t dry sand or abrasive blast) and avoid burning off the surfaces if unsure of the temperature of the heat gun (temperatures over 400°C will vaporise the lead, which is highly dangerous). Chemical stripping, wet scraping or wet sanding are best. Also, take care in cleaning up the residue.

Use of peel-away paint stripping systems are to be encouraged – and use strictly according to manufacturer’s instructions.

**If you would like to talk to an Archicentre Australia architect about a particular matter, please call Archicentre Australia on 1300 13 45 13 or go to [www.archicentreaustralia.com.au](http://www.archicentreaustralia.com.au)**