[IMAGE]

Fighting Lead Poisoning with Vitamin C

Muscle and joint pain, headaches, memory and concentration problems, nerve and digestive disorders, slowed growth ‹ these are just a few of the potential consequences of lead poisoning. Lead poisoning is caused by exposure to lead from our environment -- in old water pipes, old painted toys or furniture, or foods/liquids stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery. And if you live in a house built before 1978, the paint on your walls probably contains lead.

Increasing evidence suggests that nutritional deficiencies also affect levels of lead in the human body (See ³Get the Lead out with Vitamins² in the September 1999 *To Your Health*). A recent study published by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that subjects with high levels of vitamin C intake had less measureable lead in their bloodstream than subjects with low levels of vitamin C intake. Specifically, the data showed that:

- Children with the higher vitamin C intake were 89% less likely to have elevated blood lead levels compared with youths with the lowest intake; and
- Adults with the highest vitamin C intake were 65-68% less likely to have elevated blood lead levels compared with adults with the lowest intake.

If you think lead poisoning isn¹t a problem anymore, think again. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has developed screening programs to identify childhood blood lead levels; among adults, work-related lead exposure has been targeted as an area of concern by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Your doctor can tell you more about the dangers of lead poisoning and what you can do to limit your exposure.

Reference:

Simon JA, Hudes ES. Relationship of ascorbic acid to blood lead levels. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, June 23/30, 1999: Vol. 281, No. 24, pp2289-2293