

# Childhood Lead Exposure in Massachusetts

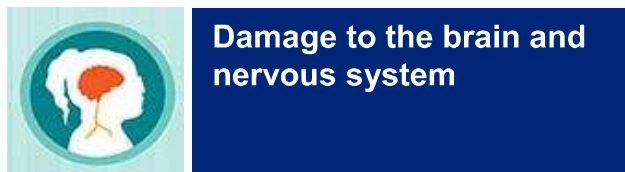
## Impact at a Glance

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health enforces the state's laws on lead exposure through the prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment of childhood lead poisoning, including elimination of the sources of poisoning.

While substantial gains have been made to mitigate its harmful effects, **lead exposure remains a significant health risk for children across Massachusetts.**

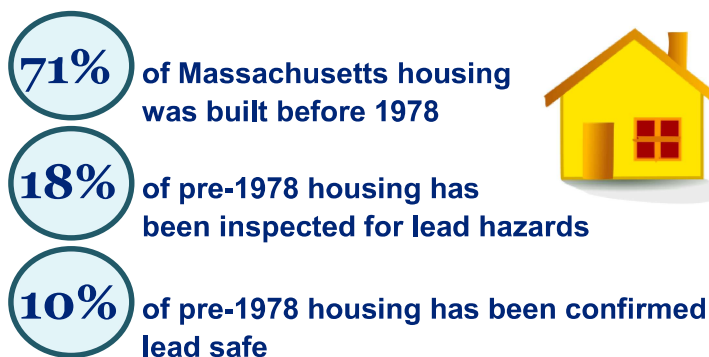
### Health Effects of Lead Exposure

There is no safe level of lead exposure and **childhood exposure to even low levels can cause severe and irreversible effects**, including:



### Lead in Homes by the Numbers

Lead-based paints were banned in homes in 1978.



### Race and Income Inequities

Lead is a critical health equity issue. **Lead exposure in Massachusetts disproportionately impacts low income communities and communities of color.** Historical housing policies that have perpetuated segregation and limited opportunity for home ownership, such as redlining, have led to the increase in risk factors for lead poisoning in black communities, including older housing stock, dilapidated housing and fewer owner-occupied housing units.


Children living in low income communities are over **3x more likely to have elevated blood lead levels** than children living in high income communities.

Black children are nearly **2.5x more likely to have lead poisoning** than white children.



**3,555** Massachusetts children tested with elevated blood lead levels in 2017.

### Lead Paint is the Primary Hazard



When children are identified as lead poisoned, **most often the source of the exposure is through ingestion of dust or soil contaminated by loose or deteriorated lead paint** or lead paint that was disturbed by unsafe renovation work in their homes.



For more information on DPH's Childhood Lead Prevention Program, visit: [www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program)