



Beware of Lead

Dishes and Cookware



Colorful dishes, pottery, cookware, and glasses can contain lead. Lead can get in your body from food and drinks prepared or served in plates, glasses, or cookware that contains lead.

Lead and Health

Lead poisoning is extremely dangerous for adults and children. After lead gets in the body, it can cause lifelong brain damage, permanent injuries, and disabilities. There is no safe level of lead. Many people with lead poisoning don't feel sick. A blood lead test is the only way to know if you have high levels of lead.

Make Informed Choices

Use your traditional cooking and serving items for decoration or save them for special occasions. Using these every day for food or drink increases the risk of lead poisoning.



Risky Items

Avoid using these items for preparing and serving foods and drinks:

- Antique ceramic, porcelain, clay, terracotta, and metal dishes
- Antique crystal glassware and decanters
- Imported patterned or brightly colored dishes, cookware, or glasses

- Handmade ceramics
- Aluminum cookware
- Decorative pottery or metalware labeled “Not for Food Use – May Poison Food”
- Damaged or worn ceramics
- Dishes and glasses with raised or worn decorations



When Buying

- Buy products made in the United States. Avoid products where the country of origin or brand is unknown.
- Avoid ceramic, porcelain, clay, terracotta, and metal dishes from Mexico, China, Italy, and Japan. Some are banned from being sold in the United States because they contain lead.
- Choose stainless steel cookware. These are a better choice because they are less likely to contain lead.
- Pay attention to labels that warn against using items for serving or preparing foods or drinks. This is an example of a warning:





How Lead Gets in Items

- Ceramics can be decorated with lead paint and coated with lead-based glaze.
- Lead was used to make antique crystal glassware.
- Lead can be found in imported or antique metal cups and dishes made from copper, brass, kansa, and pewter.
- Imported aluminum pots or pressure cookers may be made with scrap metal that contains lead.

If you use traditional cooking and serving items that may contain lead often, talk to your health care provider about a blood lead test.

Learn More
health.ny.gov/leadsources

