

Lead Exposure in Indoor Shooting Ranges

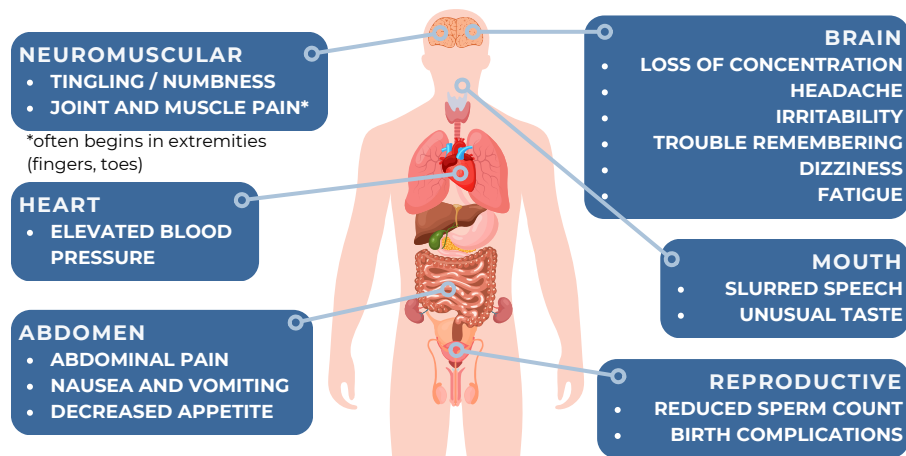
What is lead?

Lead is a toxic element found throughout the environment. No level of lead is considered safe for human health, and even small amounts in the body can adversely affect health. Lead exposure is prevalent in Pennsylvania (PA) and comes from both occupational and non-occupational sources. Data collected through the PA Department of Health Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance (ABLES) program show that shooting ranges are a notable source of occupational and recreational lead exposure in PA.

How am I exposed to lead while shooting and who is at risk of exposure?

Firing lead bullets generates dust containing lead particles, which can be inhaled by individuals on the range. Employees and volunteers with firing range cleaning and maintenance roles are at the greatest risk of exposure to high lead concentrations. Individuals who regularly shoot and visit ranges are also at risk of lead exposure. Ranges with poor cleaning protocols or ventilation systems and lack of personal protective measures increase susceptibility to **inhaling** lead dust. Lead dust that has settled on surfaces (including skin) can be touched and **ingested** by touching the mouth or face, or by eating/drinking after touching a contaminated surface. If you are concerned about lead exposure, visit your health care provider to have your blood tested for lead.

What are the health impacts of lead exposure?



What is take-home lead exposure?

Without exposure prevention and proper lead clean-up, lead can settle on an individual's body, clothing, and personal items. When coming home, that individual may bring that lead with them and expose other household members. Concerns about take-home exposure can be discussed with a healthcare provider and blood can be tested for lead.

What can I do to protect myself and others from lead exposure while shooting?

- Wash hands often, especially before eating and drinking, and after leaving the range
- Eat or drink outside of the shooting range.
- Use an N95 respirator in well-ventilated ranges or a half facepiece reusable respirator in poorly maintained ranges to avoid inhaling lead dust.
- Use a wet cloth or lead removal wipes to clean surfaces that may be contaminated with lead.
- Designate clothing to wear exclusively at the range and wash them separately from other clothes.
- Shower upon returning home to remove lead dust that may have accumulated on hair/skin.
- Consider using non-lead bullets, such as copper, or consider practicing in an outdoor range.



N95 RESPIRATOR



HALF FACEPIECE RESPIRATOR

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