Public Health –
Seattle & King County
Environmental
Health Services

dirtalert@kingcounty.gov
kingcounty.gov/health/tsp
206.477.DIRT

Public Health
Seattle & King County

ARSENIC AND LEAD In the Soil

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY!

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DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

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Public Health
Seattle & King County

Arsenic and Lead in King County

For almost 100 years, arsenic, and lead, were blown from a smoke stack throughout Pierce and King Counties from the ASARCO copper smelter in Ruston, Washington. The smelter closed in 1986. Even though the smelter is no longer operating the arsenic and lead remain in the soil and will continue to be a health risk for years to come.

King County communities most affected are:

- **Vashon-Maury Island**
- **Parts of Federal Way and Kent**
- **Des Moines**
- **SeaTac**
- **Normandy Park**
- **Burien**
- **Tukwila**
- **North Highline area**
- **West Seattle**

For more information, contact the Public Health – Seattle & King County at dirtalert@kingcounty.gov or **206.477.DIRT** or visit **kingcounty.gov/health/tsp**.

The Risk to Human Health

Eating and breathing dust that contains arsenic and lead can contribute to poor health, especially in young children.

- Lead is linked to developmental disabilities in children and may affect I.Q.
- Arsenic may cause cancer later on in life and may also contribute to heart disease.
- Children, especially toddlers, are at highest risk because they put things into their mouths. They can also inhale dust or eat it when it falls on food of anything they put in their mouths.

Contact Your Healthcare Provider

If you are concerned about exposure to arsenic, lead or other contaminants, contact your health care provider for more information.

Healthy Actions

Important Safety Guidelines

Healthy Actions are simple things you and your family can do to reduce contact with arsenic and lead in dirt. Even relatively small changes can help everyone to reduce their risk of contact with arsenic, lead and other harmful chemicals.

FOR MORE **INFORMATION**, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dirt Alert
Public Health – Seattle & King County
206.477.DIRT • dirtalert@kingcounty.gov
www.kingcounty.gov/health/tsp

or

Tacoma Smelter Plume Project
Washington Department of Ecology
360.407.6300 • www.ecy.wa.gov

Kick Off Your Shoes

Dust and dirt are tracked inside on shoes.

Leave your shoes at the door or use a "wipe-off" mat to greatly reduce dirt and dust that gets into your home.

Provide a shoe rack or designate an area for shoes at your door.

Use Plenty of Soap and Water

Dirt is found on hands, toys, shoes, clothing and pets. Washing dirt off is a healthy thing to do. (Hand sanitizers do not remove arsenic and lead from hands.)

Wash your hands well before eating and after working or playing in the soil. Use a scrub brush to clean dirt from under your nails.

Wash heavily soiled clothing separately from other laundry.

Wash children's toys, bedding, and pacifiers frequently.

Keep Pets Clean

Pets walk, roll, and lie down in dirt and soil. When pets come into the house, their fur and paws bring in soil and dust too.

Wipe off all excess dirt and mud before your pet comes into your home. Brush and bathe your pet regularly.

Restrict your pet to parts of your home that are free from carpeting and upholstery.

Give pets their own "bed" or place within your home.

Mop, Dust and Vacuum

People and pets track in dirt or it can enter your home in the form of small dust particles through windows and doors. Dust and dirt settle on carpeting, throw rugs, curtains, upholstered furniture, windowsills and bookcases.

Damp-dusting and vacuuming at least once a week decreases the amount of dust and dirt in your home.

Always use a damp-mop or a damp-cloth when you dust.

Maintain Your Home and Yard

Covering bare patches and keeping up with home-maintenance keeps harmful dirt away from your family.

Cover bare patches in your yard with a ground cover such as grass, gravel, a wood or mulch product or native plants – they require less watering and maintenance.

Maintain the painted surfaces of your home. Homes built before 1978 may have been painted with paint containing lead. When lead-paint chips or wears away, it becomes a major source of lead, both inside and outside the home.

Have your soil tested.

Eat a Healthy Diet

Iron, calcium and vitamin C help to decrease absorption of lead.

Eat a diet rich with these nutrients. Include foods like broccoli, spinach, potatoes, dairy products and citrus fruits.

Wash Fruits and Vegetables

Arsenic and lead may be in dust and dirt found on the surface of fruits and vegetables. There is a slight chance that leafy vegetables, lettuce or kale, grown in contaminated soil may absorb very small amounts of contaminants.

Wash all fruits and vegetables to make sure all dirt is removed. Use a scrub brush on potatoes, squash, carrots, etc.

Always wear shoes and gloves when gardening or working in the soil and take them off before coming into your home.

Grow your produce in raised beds made with arsenic-free materials.

MOP • WASH • SCRUB • DUST • WIPE