



# SIMPLE ACTIONS TO REDUCE CHILDREN'S EXPOSURE TO CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINANTS

Direction de santé publique de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

## INSIDE YOUR RESIDENCE

- Clean work surfaces in the kitchen (table and counter) using a damp cloth, especially before preparing meals and snacks. Rinse the cloth several times while using it.
- Clean the floors of your home on a regular basis. Frequently rinse your mop when doing so. Regularly vacuum carpeted areas. A HEPA vacuum is recommended to remove the maximum amount of metallic dust.
- Wash your hands before preparing meals, eating, and after playing outside or having played with an animal.
- Prevent your children from eating soil or sand as much as possible.
- Eat regularly and have a well-balanced diet. The absorption of contaminants, such as lead and cadmium, is greater when a child's stomach is empty.
- Wash your children's toys on a regular basis.
- If your child has a pacifier (soother), make sure it does not lie on the ground and accumulate dust.
- Avoid exposing children to secondary cigarette smoke, especially in enclosed spaces with limited air circulation. Cigarette smoke is the main source of cadmium exposure.

It is preferable that children are not nearby when you vacuum or sweep the floor, as dust and contaminants can become airborne.

Do you hunt? Avoid eating the entrails (kidneys and liver) of large game from around Rouyn-Noranda. These are highly contaminated with cadmium.

## OUTSIDE YOUR RESIDENCE

- If you have a sandbox, make sure the sand comes from a trusted provider. Cover the sandbox when you are not using it.
- Minimize the amount of bare ground in your yard.
- If you grow fruit and vegetables in your garden, wash them thoroughly before eating them and peel your root vegetables (e.g. carrots).
- If you have a rustic camp or cottage served by a domestic well, make sure your water does not contain any contaminants. Arsenic is one of the most widespread contaminants found in the soil of the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region.

Appearances can be deceptive; do not rely on the water's colour or taste to judge its quality. Contamination often goes unnoticed because it does not change the water's appearance or taste. It is thus important to perform appropriate tests.

## ! How can I reduce the amount of dust in home?

- Wipe your feet before entering your home. Clean your doormat regularly.
- Leave dirty boots and shoes outside. Do not walk around the house with your boots or shoes.
- When there are high winds, shut your windows.
- Clean your windows on a regular basis using a damp cloth.
- Bathe dogs often.
- Leave your work clothes outside, especially if you work in the mining industry.



## HERE ARE SOME EVERYDAY PRODUCTS THAT CAN POSE HEALTH RISKS AND THAT REQUIRE YOUR SPECIAL ATTENTION :

- Peeling or chipped lead-based paint
- Pipework with lead solders or other lead components
- Some types of cheap jewellery
- Lead bullets and ammunition for hunting
- Wood treated with arsenic
- Nickel-cadmium batteries

To know more about the precautions to be taken with these products, visit the website of the CISSS de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

[www.cisss-at.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.cisss-at.gouv.qc.ca)

Click on *Étude de biosurveillance - Quartier Notre-Dame*.

## ? Questions?

Contact the environmental health team of the Direction de santé publique :

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