



Protect Yourself from Lead Exposure at Firing Ranges

Scientists agree that no safe level of lead in our bodies exists. Lead poisoning is preventable. Lead can enter our bodies by breathing it in, swallowing it, or absorbing it through our skin. As a neurotoxin, lead can interfere with our body's cell functioning, leading to a variety of symptoms and health problems, for children and adults. For children ages six and under, lead is particularly toxic because their brains and nervous systems are not fully developed. While symptoms of lead poisoning may not be immediately obvious, behavior and learning problems can emerge later.

How to keep you and your loved ones safe from lead poisoning

- Never eat, drink, or smoke on the range.
- Avoid taking a purse or backpack to the range.
- Don't touch your face while handling your firearm.
- Use total metal jacket or lead-free ammunition, as well as no-lead primers when available.
- Wear latex gloves when cleaning brass and your firearm.
- Thoroughly wash your hands, face, and any other exposed skin with cool, soapy water after handling your firearm. Hand sanitizer does not remove lead. (See below.)
- Change into clean clothes and shoes before getting into your vehicle, especially before going into your home.
- Use lead cleaning wipes for your weapon, vehicle, or any surface you have touched while handling your firearm.
- Wash the clothes you wore while shooting in a separate load of laundry.
- Never clean your firearm anywhere near areas where you eat or prepare food or in areas where children play.
- Ideally, have a dedicated place to clean your firearm, such as outside or in a garage.

Resources

- Article "Lead exposure at firing ranges—a review"
<https://ehjournal.biomedcentral.com/counter/pdf/10.1186/s12940-017-0246-0.pdf>
(note the CDC reference blood lead level has been reduced to 3.5 µg/dL from 5 µg/dL)
- Preventing Lead Exposure at Shooting Ranges
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03697.pdf>
- NIOSH Lead Information
https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/135294/cdc_135294_DS1.pdf
- Use a NIOSH developed or approved product proven to decontaminate your skin, such as Hygenall lead removal soap (<https://hygenall.com>), following exposure to lead dust.