



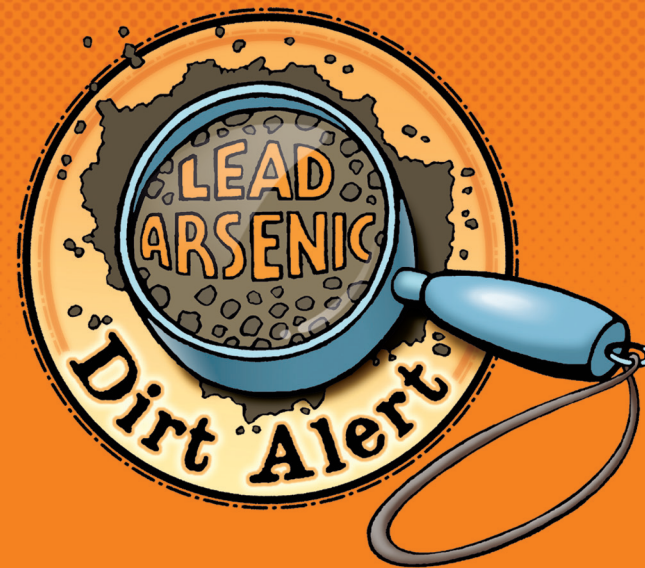
Tacoma-Pierce County  
Health Department  
Environmental Health Division

dirtalert@tpchd.org  
www.tpchd.org/dirtalert  
(253) 798-6492

3629 South D St. • Tacoma, WA 98418



Printed on recycled paper with post-consumer content • 2/2011



## ARSENIC AND LEAD In the Soil

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY!

www.tpchd.org/dirtalert • (253) 798-6492



### Arsenic and Lead in Pierce 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 risks for years to come.

Pierce County communities most affected are:

- North Tacoma
- Northeast Tacoma
- West End Tacoma
- University Place
- Fircrest
- Lakewood
- Steilacoom
- Parts of Gig Harbor, Fox Island, Anderson Island, Fort Lewis and Dupont.



For more information, contact  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health  
Department at [dirtalert@tpchd.org](mailto:dirtalert@tpchd.org) or  
(253) 798-6492, or visit  
[www.tpchd.org/dirtalert](http://www.tpchd.org/dirtalert).

### 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.
- At greatest risk are children under the age of 6 because they put things into their mouths.
- Dust can be inhaled and is eaten when it falls on food or anything that is put into 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.

Tom the Gardener



# 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  
Environmental Health Division  
Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department  
(253) 798-6492 • [www.tpchd.org/dirtalert](http://www.tpchd.org/dirtalert)  
[dirtalert@tpchd.org](mailto:dirtalert@tpchd.org)



or

Tacoma Smelter  
Plume Project  
Washington Department of Ecology  
(360) 407-6257 • [www.ecy.wa.gov](http://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 settles on carpeting, throw rugs, curtains, upholstered furniture, as well as 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, wood/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.



Sudsy Sally

MOP • WASH • SCRUB • DUST • WIPE