

Homemade Fishing Weights Can Be Hazardous to Your Health



Can I harm myself and my family by making fishing weights or sinkers at home?

Yes. Children and adults can develop serious health problems when lead dust or fume is spread throughout your home.

The cutting, grinding, or melting of lead at home is an unsafe practice. When you melt lead it creates airborne particles (fumes), or when you cut or grind lead, it can generate dust that can easily spread throughout an area. Lead dust can stick to floors, walls, furniture, clothing, and children's toys. As a result, children and adults can become sick by breathing or ingesting lead particles.

Can lead damage my body?

Yes. The chart below describes health problems in adults associated with various blood lead levels. The blood lead level measures how much lead is in your bloodstream. It is measured in micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$).

Severity of health problem	Blood lead level in $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$	Changes happening in body
Severe health effects may happen quickly and be permanent	110	Brain damage
	100	
	90	
Serious health effects may occur	80	Dangerous reduction in blood's ability to carry oxygen
	70	
	60	
	50	
Lead may have effects without symptoms	40	Decreased blood production
	Lead starts building up in your system	30
20		Nerve damage
		10
Average level for healthy adults	5	Increase in blood pressure
	3	Effects on unborn child in pregnant women
	0	Increased risk of high blood pressure
		Decreased kidney function

Children are even more at risk.

Exposure to lead may cause:

- ◆ Lowered intelligence
- ◆ Hyperactivity
- ◆ Attention deficits
- ◆ Developmental problems
- ◆ Decreased hearing



If your child has a blood lead level between 5-10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ or higher, talk with your health care provider and local health department about what to do.

Prevent lead poisoning in children and adults

- ➔ If you think that you or your child have been exposed to lead or have lead poisoning, see your health care provider immediately.
- ➔ Purchase finished commercial fishing weights instead of making homemade fishing weights.

