

EPA wants disclosure on lead-based paints

WASHINGTON (AP) — Government rules adopted last month require homeowners and landlords to inform buyers and tenants of lead risks.

The Environmental Protection Agency rules call for notification of the presence of lead-based paint in properties built before 1978, when lead was banned from household paint.

The EPA estimates that more than 1.7 million American children have been poisoned by lead paint. It calculates that about 64 million homes — more than half in the nation — have lead-based paint on the walls.

The new rules also give buyers 10 days to have homes inspected for lead before they close the deal. Owners and landlords must also distribute a pamphlet that explains how to control and

Tips on preventing lead poisoning

These are suggestions for lead poisoning prevention:

— Keep children from touching surfaces covered with lead paint, commonly used before being banned from household use in 1978.

— Check woodwork and friction surfaces such as doors and windows for chipping paint and paint dust.

— Floors, window sills and other hard surfaces in older homes should be washed weekly with a high phosphate detergent.

— Make sure children eat nutritious meals regularly. Lead is more easily absorbed on an empty stomach.

— Wash children's hands and faces before the eat, and wash toys and pacifiers frequently.

behavioral problems for children under 6.

In issuing the rules, officials explicitly rejected calls to require removal of lead-based paint.

Henry Cisneros, secretary of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, said the need to remove the danger must be balanced with the need to provide affordable housing.

Last summer, a national task force recommended a host of solutions, including allowing landlords some protection from lawsuits if they remove the hazard. It also suggested checking at least once a year for deteriorated paint in rental housing and doing prompt repairs.

abate lead hazards.

Inhalation or swallowing even tiny

amounts of lead can cause brain damage, lifelong learning disabilities and

Renovate your bath without remodeling

Do you have a blah bathroom? A wimpy washroom? And an itty-bitty budget? Well, there are several things you can do to perk it up without tearing holes in the walls or your wallet.

The ideas and suggestions that follow will probably take only a day to complete, but the transformation can be dramatic.

"If you're looking for just a quick change, the easiest way to start is

through accessories," said Home Depot's design center expert Shirley Higgins.

A different shower curtain, window treatment, throw rug, and some decorative towels can add new life.

Throw in a few pictures to hang on the walls, as well as some plants, baskets, candles or other bric-a-brac to add texture and interest.

A slightly higher step might involve

changing your bathroom hardware.

Remove the dingy, toothpaste-covered drawer and cabinet pulls and replace them with knobs made of shiny brass, contemporary ceramic, or classic wood. More significant changes can call for new paint or wallpaper.

A bathroom just happens to be the perfect place to try your hand at the new paint techniques. Stenciling, sponging, ragging and other methods

are a few ways to experiment with your walls.

Marbleizing can add a special touch to a countertop. Or, just let loose and get those creative juices flowing. Yards of fabric can be stapled to the walls for an unusual and semi-permanent wall-covering.

If you're particularly artistic, try a mural or trompe l'oeil.

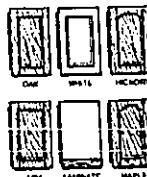
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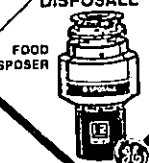


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