

Effects of Lead Exposures

Symptoms:

Loss of appetite
Constipation
Nausea
Insomnia
Irritability
Headache
Muscle/joint pain
Anxiety
Tiredness/weakness
Hyperactivity
Tremors/numbness
Dizziness
Pallor
Colic/abdominal pain
Metallic taste

Possible effects of large, acute exposures:

Acute encephalopathy with:
Seizures
Coma
Death from cardiopulmonary arrest

Possible effects of chronic exposures:

Urinary dysfunction/kidney disease
Anemia
Muscle paralysis (e.g. wrist or foot drop)
Encephalopathy with:
Vomiting
Dullness progressing to drowsiness and stupor
Memory loss
Restlessness
Irritability
Tremor
Convulsions/seizures
Coma
Death
Males:
Decreased sex drive
Impotence
Sterility
Defective sperm cells
Females:
Abnormal menstrual cycles
Decreased fertility
Miscarriage
Stillbirth
Children born to exposed parents:
Birth defects
Mental retardation
Behavioral disorders
Death during first year of childhood

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor. Occupational Safety and Health Administration:
www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb
(5/02)