

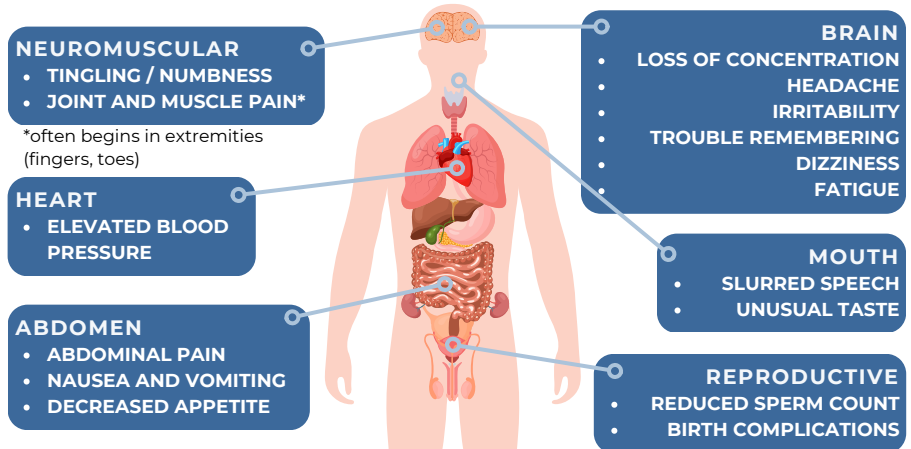
Lead Exposure Among High School Rifle Teams

What is lead?

Lead is a toxic element found throughout the environment. No level of lead is considered safe for human health, and even small amounts in the body can adversely affect health. Through interviews with Pennsylvania adults with elevated blood lead levels, the Pennsylvania (PA) Department of Health identified shooting ranges as a significant source of lead exposure in PA. Given that 25+ PA high schools participate in rifle sports, it is important to bring awareness to athletes, coaches, and parents about best practices and potential health impacts associated with lead exposure.

What are the health impacts of lead exposure?

Adolescent exposure to lead has been associated with decreased IQ scores, changes in thyroid function, kidney damage, hearing loss, and changes in behavior. Additional symptoms are shown to the right. If you are concerned about lead exposure and potential symptoms, talk to your physician and have your blood tested for lead.



How am I exposed to lead while shooting?

Lead bullets generate a cloud of lead dust when fired. If a range is poorly maintained, or proper personal protection is not used, lead dust can be **inhaled**. Lead dust that has settled on surfaces (including skin) can be touched and **ingested** by touching the mouth or face, or by eating/drinking after touching a contaminated surface.



What is take-home lead exposure?

Without exposure prevention and proper lead clean-up, lead can settle on an individual's body, clothing, and personal items. This lead may be brought home and expose other household members. Concerns about take-home exposure can be discussed with a healthcare provider and blood can be tested for lead.

What can I do to protect myself and others from lead exposure while shooting?

- Wash hands often, especially before eating and drinking, and after leaving the range.
- Eat or drink outside of the shooting range.
- Use an N95 respirator in well-ventilated ranges or a half facepiece reusable respirator in poorly maintained ranges to avoid inhaling lead dust.
- Use a wet cloth or lead removal wipes to clean surfaces that may be contaminated with lead.
- Designate clothing to wear exclusively at the range and wash them separately from other clothes.
- Shower upon returning home to remove lead dust that may have accumulated on hair/skin.
- Consider using non-lead bullets, such as copper, or consider practicing in an outdoor range.
- Notify a parent, guardian, and/or coach if you notice any lead exposure symptoms.



N95 RESPIRATOR



HALF FACEPIECE RESPIRATOR

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