

# Southside Chattanooga

## Lead Site Community Fact Sheet

### What is the Southside Chattanooga Lead (SSCL) Site?

- The Southside Chattanooga Lead (SSCL) Site is an area in downtown Chattanooga where soil may contain high levels of lead.
- SSCL site includes 8 neighborhoods: Alton Park, East Lake, Highland Park, Oak Grove, Richmond, Cowart Place, Jefferson Heights, and Southside Gardens.
- Before the dangers of lead were known, waste materials with lead from old metal foundries were used as fill material in yards
- **The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) are currently working to remove soil with high lead levels.**



A yard in SSCL site during remediation.

### SSCL Site History

2010

- Residents from the southside of Chattanooga became ill and were found to have high levels of lead in their blood.
- TDEC along with TN Department of Health (TDH) began investigating their property and found high lead levels in their soil.

2011

- The EPA and TDEC tested several properties in the neighborhood and found several yards with high lead levels.
- EPA and TDEC began remediation; removing dirty soil, filling in with clean soil, and laying sod.

2016

- TDH and TDEC hosted a SoilSHOP to test soil from additional neighborhoods.
- More dirty yards were found in an additional neighborhood.

2018

- The Southside Chattanooga Lead Site was officially put on the EPA's National Priorities List for cleanup and further investigation.

2025

- The SSCL Health Consultation published by TDH is available for the public.
- As of December 31, 2025, 1,713 properties in Southside Chattanooga were known to have elevated lead levels in the soil; 1,179 of those properties have been cleaned up and 534 are still waiting to be cleaned.
- Soil testing continues in the SSCL site.

### Why Is Lead Dangerous?



- Lead exposure can have a harmful effect on every organ system in the body.
- Lead exposure is especially harmful to the brain (neurological), heart (cardiovascular), and kidney (renal) systems.
- Pregnant women, infants, and children face the most danger from lead.
- Exposure in children can delay growth and development, damage hearing and speech, and cause learning or behavioral problems.
- Exposure when pregnant can increase the risk of miscarriage; cause damage to the baby's brain, kidneys, and nervous system; and could cause baby to be born prematurely or underweight.

## How Are You Exposed?



### Ingestion

- This is how most people are exposed to lead.
- 20-70% of ingested lead is absorbed into the body
- Sources:
  - Paint chips, dust, or soil particles
  - Food
  - Water
  - Alcohol
  - Home remedies



### Inhalation

- Almost all inhaled lead is absorbed into the body.
- Sources:
  - Home renovations and lead paint dust
  - Hobbies such as glass making or soldering
  - Tobacco and tobacco smoke



### Dermal

- Most likely among people who work with lead or materials containing lead.
- Organic lead is more likely to be absorbed through the skin than inorganic lead.



### Internal

- Lead may be stored in the body for a long time in some tissues such as teeth and bones.
- Unborn children can be exposed to lead in-utero if the mother is exposed.
- Foreign objects, such as jewelry, in the body may contain lead.

## How Can You Reduce Your Exposure To Lead?

- Keep homes clean & dust free.
- Eat a diet high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- Play in grass or areas with covered soil.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Shower & change clothes.
- Wash toys, pacifiers, & bottles frequently.
- Hire lead-safe certified professionals for home renovations.
- Flush pipes, maintain clean drinking water, & use cold water.
- Get your child tested.
- Bathe pets often.

## Should Your Yard Be Tested?

The EPA will test your soil for **free** if you live in or own a property in the Southside Chattanooga neighborhoods of Alton Park, Cowart Place, East Lake, Highland Park, Jefferson Heights, Oak Grove, Richmond, or Southside Gardens.



You must complete and sign a sampling access authorization form which must be emailed to [Jefferies.Jasmin@epa.gov](mailto:Jefferies.Jasmin@epa.gov) or [Wiley.Donnica@epa.gov](mailto:Wiley.Donnica@epa.gov) or mailed to: Donnica Wiley, U.S. EPA-Region 4, 61 Forsyth St. SW, ORA – 14th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30303-8909



After submitting your authorization form, an EPA contractor will contact you to schedule a date for soil sampling.



A soil sample is collected by the EPA.

**If your lead concentrations are higher than 360 parts per million, your property will be added to the list of yards to be cleaned up *at no cost to you.***



If you have medical concerns, please contact your doctor. For other health questions, please email [Cayla.Hayeslip@tn.gov](mailto:Cayla.Hayeslip@tn.gov) or call 615-741-8489



If you have site-related questions, please contact EPA or Troy Keith at [Troy.Keith@tn.gov](mailto:Troy.Keith@tn.gov) or call 423-634-5711

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