

## What should I do if I have this type of traditional ceramic pottery?

Our cultural traditions are important. They build strong family and cultural bonds across generations and give us a sense of belonging. But if you have any of these items, you should take action.



- Avoid using this item for preparing, storing, or serving food.
- Use a lead-free (aka "sin plomo") alternative.
- Check your family for lead poisoning with a simple blood test. Talk to your doctor about testing options.
- Test the item for lead. Two options are available online:
  - › Sodium Rhodizonate swabs (dip in white vinegar before use)
  - › Fluorescent lead test

## Is there a way to remove lead from my ceramic dishware?

No. No amount of washing, boiling, or other process can remove lead from pottery. And you can't tell if something contains lead simply by looking at it.



## Contact Information

Questions?

Contact Multnomah County Leadline:

- Call 503.988.4000
- Email [leadline@multco.us](mailto:leadline@multco.us)

For all other counties contact the State of Oregon Lead Program:

- Call 971.673.0440
- Email [leadprogram@odhsoha.oregon.gov](mailto:leadprogram@odhsoha.oregon.gov)

We provide lead prevention information and referral. Our staff speaks Spanish and English and interpreters in other languages are available.

## Resources

Scan the QR code or visit [multco.us/health/lead-poisoning-prevention](http://multco.us/health/lead-poisoning-prevention)



# Traditional Ceramic Pottery

## A Potential Source of Lead Poisoning







## What is traditional ceramic pottery?

Traditional, hand-made ceramic pottery is made in some parts of Mexico, Central and South America, and some Asian countries. It's beautiful and brings the culture, art and history of these places into your home. These items are often brought into the U.S. from other countries but can also be purchased locally.

Some common names include:

- Barro (also barro negro)
- Cerámica
- Ceramic ware
- Folk pottery
- Mexican pottery
- Vidriado



Some of this dishware contains harmful lead. You cannot tell if an item has lead just by looking at it, so be careful when using traditional ceramic pottery for cooking, serving, or storing food or drinks.



## What is lead?

Lead is a toxic substance present in our environment and has been mined, processed, and used in commercial and household products for hundreds of years. We are mostly exposed from contamination of air, water, soil, and household dust from old paint. Exposure to even small amounts of lead is a health concern for most people. Exposure to larger amounts of lead, over more time, can cause lead poisoning.



## What is lead poisoning?

Unfortunately, lead is a poison and harms people if it enters the body. Once lead enters the human environment, there is no way to destroy it or make it harmless. We must prevent exposure to lead.

Lead poisoning occurs when too much lead builds up in the body. We can get lead poisoning by breathing or swallowing particles that contain lead. Even a little lead can make children slower learners. Very high levels of lead exposure can cause coma, seizures and death.

Exposure to lead can cause:

- Brain damage and lower intelligence
- Behavior and learning problems
- Impaired speech and language
- Slowed growth
- Kidney and liver damage

Consuming even small amounts of lead can be harmful and cause lead poisoning.

## Who is most at risk for lead poisoning?

Lead poisoning can hurt normal brain development. That's why we're most concerned for:

- Young children
- Pregnant people

A child with lead poisoning may not look or act sick.



## How does lead from pottery get into your body?

Lead can leach from the surface of the pottery. It can get into food or beverages when they are stored, prepared or consumed from an item with lead. When you ingest the food or drink, the lead gets into your body. Acidic foods and drinks leach lead out of ceramic ware much faster than non-acid foods.

