

# Heavy Metals and Your Health

## What You Need to Know About Hidden Toxic Exposures

### Why It Matters

Heavy metal exposure is more common than many people realize—and it can silently affect your health over time. Toxic metals like **lead**, **mercury**, **arsenic**, and **cadmium** have been linked to:

- Fatigue and brain fog
- Hormonal imbalance
- Infertility and reproductive issues
- Mood swings or depression
- Autoimmune disease
- Neurological symptoms
- Cancer

Understanding your potential exposure and getting tested can be a key step in healing and prevention.

### Common Toxic Metals and Their Sources

Metal	Main Sources	Possible Health Effects
Lead	Old paint (pre-1978), pipes, wine, shooting ranges	High blood pressure, brain fog, kidney and heart issues
Mercury	Dental fillings, fish, HFCS, some vaccines	Memory loss, thyroid dysfunction, autoimmunity, diabetes
Arsenic	Well water, rice, poultry, apple juice	Skin changes, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes
Cadmium	Cigarette smoke, polluted soil or air, some foods	Kidney damage, osteoporosis, cardiovascular problems
Manganese	Contaminated water, gasoline additive (MMT), welding	Tremors, mood issues, Parkinson-like symptoms
Thallium	Leafy greens, opiates, industrial waste	Fatigue, hair loss, nerve damage
Cobalt	Metal hip implants	Thyroid issues, heart problems, cognitive decline
Gadolinium	MRI contrast dye	Rare brain/kidney damage, skin fibrosis (in sensitive cases)

## Signs of Heavy Metal Toxicity

Do you have unexplained or persistent symptoms? Consider getting evaluated if you experience:

- Chronic fatigue or low energy
- Memory problems or brain fog
- Hormonal issues (thyroid, testosterone)
- Infertility or decreased libido
- Neurological symptoms (tingling, tremors, irritability)
- Frequent infections or inflammation
- Autoimmune flares without clear cause

## How Are Metals Tested?

Different metals require different methods for accurate detection:

Metal	Best Test	Notes
Lead	Blood	Ideally under 1.0 mcg/dL
Mercury	Blood (fish) / Urine (fillings)	Fish = methylmercury; Fillings = inorganic mercury
Arsenic	Urine	Avoid seafood 3–5 days prior to testing
Cadmium	Urine	Reflects long-term exposure
Manganese	Blood, imaging	No perfect test—requires clinical evaluation
Gadolinium	Urine (post-MRI)	Only needed after frequent imaging or if symptoms develop
Cobalt	Blood or urine	Especially after hip implant surgery

## Important for Pregnancy and Fertility

Even **low levels of lead or mercury** can impact a developing baby. If you're planning to conceive or are already pregnant, talk to your provider about safe testing and detox support.

## What You Can Do

### ✓ Test when appropriate

If you've had symptoms, past exposures (like old fillings or well water), or work in high-risk industries, testing is a smart step.

### ✓ Avoid continued exposure

- Drink filtered water
- Avoid high-mercury fish (like tuna, swordfish)
- Be cautious with old buildings or moldy environments
- Stop smoking or avoid secondhand smoke

### ✓ Support your detox pathways

Work with a functional medicine practitioner to support:

- **Liver:** through cruciferous veggies, milk thistle, glutathione
- **Kidneys:** with hydration and electrolytes
- **Gut:** with fiber, probiotics, and regular bowel movements

### ✓ Targeted therapies may include:

- Saunas (infrared or traditional)
- Nutrient support: **magnesium, vitamin C, zinc, selenium**
- Binders (charcoal, chlorella, or zeolite)
- Chelation therapy (if needed, under medical supervision)

Heavy metals may be invisible—but their effects are not. Knowing your exposure, testing early, and supporting detox can make all the difference.