Common Sources of Lead

- **Paint**: especially in houses built before 1978
- **Dirt**: near airports, factories, highways, & orchards.
- **Water**: when it comes from lead pipes
- **Cosmetics**: like Surma, kajal, & kohl
- **Toys**: especially if they are old and painted or metal
- **Job Sites**: for people who work in factories, construction, or around metals.
- **Ammunition**: or contact with metals from military service

There is NO safe amount of lead in the body.

Lead can:
- Slow down growth and development
- Make it hard to learn
- Damage hearing and speech
- Cause behavior problems

Even low levels of lead can cause harmful changes in intelligence, behavior, and health.

Lead can harm anyone, but young children and pregnant women are at higher risk.
- Children are especially at risk from lead because of their small size and developing brains.
- If a pregnant person has a high lead level, their developing baby can also be harmed.

The harm done by lead may never go away, but lead poisoning can be prevented.

Ask your doctor to test you and your family for lead poisoning.
You can practice your traditions while protecting your family from lead:

- Support your child’s healthy development by using cosmetics from American or European brands instead of Surma.

- Cook delicious Afghan dishes like lubya or korma in pressure cookers made with stainless steel.

- Season your food with spices sold in the U.S., which do not contain lead.

- Follow the Afghan tradition of removing your shoes before entering a home and keeping rugs at entryways clean.

Other ways to stay safe include:

- Wash fruits and vegetables before cooking or eating them.

- Wash floors, window sills, and other surfaces with soap and water.

- Wash bottles, teething rings, and toys with soap and water.

- Wash your hands and your child’s hands before eating and sleeping.

- Only buy toys that say they are lead free.

- If you rent, ask your landlord about lead before you sign a lease.

- Before you buy a home, have it inspected for lead.