

## Personal tips

### Clothing

After working in the garden, wash well and change into clean clothes, keeping your "gardening clothes" separate.

It is particularly important that the shoes you have worn are removed or cleaned prior to entering your home, as they can walk lead-bearing dirt onto your clean floor and into your carpets.

Children who play in the garden should always take their shoes off prior to coming indoors for the same reason. This will also reduce your housework, as less dirt is brought into the home. Their hands will need to be well washed and dried after being in the garden.

### Children's play areas

Children need safe areas in which to play. Plans for your garden should include:-

- > Barriers over bare soil, such as grass, ground covers or bark chips.
- > Separate areas used by adults for hobbies or activities that may generate sources of lead exposure (for example, stripping down old furniture or spray painting cars).
- > Make sure that painted surfaces accessible to children are kept in good repair.
- > Keep a cover over the sandpit, particularly if your garden is visited by furry friends.

## Hand-washing

The importance of washing your hands after being in the garden cannot be emphasised enough. Dirt from under your nails and ingrained dirt should also be washed off – no quick rinses under a tap!

Children need to accept washing their hands as a normal way of life, particularly after playing or helping outside.

Remember there are a number of germs in all soils.

## For more information

**Environmental Health Centre**  
117 Gertrude Street  
PORT PIRIE SA 5540  
Telephone: 8638 4100  
[www.health.sa.gov.au](http://www.health.sa.gov.au)  
[www.pprhs.sa.gov.au](http://www.pprhs.sa.gov.au)

Non-English speaking: for information in languages other than English, call the Interpreting and Translating Centre and ask them to call The Department of Health. This service is available at no cost to you, contact (08) 8226 1990.

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# Lead and the Garden



Environmental  
Health Centre

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## Lead in the garden

Lead has been present in the homes and gardens of Port Pirie for a number of decades. It is only in more recent years that we have been aware of the harm that can be caused when this lead is absorbed into our bodies. Young children are most at risk. They are also the group who play in our gardens and outside areas most frequently.

## The general garden area

### Barriers

The easiest and most effective method of reducing lead exposure is to remove the source. Unfortunately this is not always possible. An alternative is to place a "barrier" between the source (in this case, tiny lead particles in the soil) and yourself. In the garden this can be achieved in a number of different ways.

A barrier over contaminated soils can consist of:-

- > Plants, ground covers, or grass.
- > Natural materials (mulch, pine chips etc.).
- > Man-made substances (crusher dust, pavers, concrete etc.).

## Mulching

Mulch is an excellent barrier when used correctly. It is important to cover the entire desired surface, and the mulched area should be "topped up" when the material starts to thin out over time.

Natural materials such as lawn clippings or fallen leaves are some of the best types of mulch and can often be obtained at little or no cost.

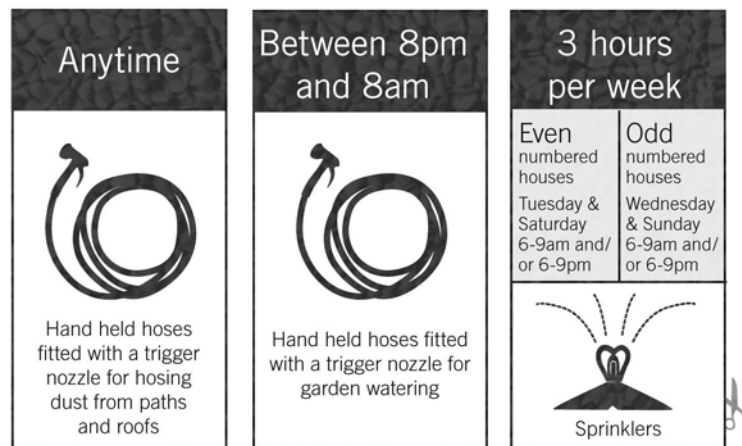
## Watering

Watering should always be done early in the morning or in the cool of the late afternoon and early evening. This minimises water wastage and prevents leaf burn.

Below are the SA Water guidelines of the enhanced level 3 water restriction exemption for the city of Port Pirie

For more information please visit [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au) or phone 1800 130 952.

Where possible, dripper systems are the most cost effective means of watering.



## The vegetable patch

In general, the rules applied to the general garden can be applied to the vegetable garden and vice versa. Some additional actions that can be followed when growing vegetables are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### Plants

Research indicates that some leafy vegetables collect lead-bearing dusts more readily from the environment than other vegetables (lettuce and silver beet for example). Such plants, when grown in Port Pirie gardens, are not recommended for consumption by young children or pregnant women.

Always remember to thoroughly wash all fruit and vegetables prior to storage and eating. This removes any surface dirt which may contain lead.

### Soils

It can be assumed that all soils in Port Pirie contain some level of lead contamination – therefore vegetable beds should be raised and good clean soil is recommended.

Compost and mulch are excellent natural ways of improving the nutrient content of your veggie beds. They can also be very cheap. Compost provides organic matter – which helps to reduce the amount of accessible lead in the soil of vegetable beds. Increased soil quality will also promote vegetable growth.

Horse manure should be used with caution as it can often contain lead if collected from the Port Pirie area. This may then contaminate your "clean" soil.