



People Caring for People

Central Michigan District Health Department
For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

LEAD POISONING

Every year, approximately 310,000 children across the United States and over 3,000 in Michigan are lead poisoned. In fact, Michigan has the sixth highest percentage of lead poisoned children in the country.

The most common way children under age six are lead poisoned is from exposure to lead paint, which is commonly found in homes built before 1978. One in every three homes in Michigan was built before 1950. Disturbing the lead paint allows dust to settle on toys, windowsills, and floors. Children can then easily swallow bits of dust and paint chips. Children may also be exposed to lead through home health remedies (e.g. arzacon and greta) and imported candies.

Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body and occurs with no obvious symptoms. Recent research has linked lead poisoning to violent crimes, lowered level of intelligence, learning disabilities, and aggressive behavior. In addition, lead exposure to a fetus during the first trimester of pregnancy can adversely affect the neurological development of the infant. To determine if your child should be tested, ask yourself these questions:

- Does your child now or in the past live in or visit a home (daycare, preschool) built before 1950 with peeling or chipping paint?
- Does your child now or in the past live in or visit a home that has been remodeled within the last year?
- Does your child have a sibling or playmate with lead poisoning?
- Does your child live with an adult whose job or hobby involves lead?
- Does your child's family use any home remedies that contain lead?

If you answered "yes" or "I don't know" to any of these questions, this means that your child could be at high risk for lead poisoning. The only way to test for lead poisoning is by asking your health care provider for a blood test.

By taking several simple steps, children can be protected from this environmental problem.

- Wash your child's hands, bottles, pacifier, and toys often
- Keep floors, window sills, and other surfaces dust and dirt free
- Give your child healthy foods to eat since this will help lead from being absorbed



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- Do not allow your child to play with jewelry, charms or other toys that may contain a high level of lead. For more information, log onto the Michigan Department of Community Health's website at www.michigan.gov/mdch - click on Prevention, then choose "lead poisoning".
- Test your home for lead

The Central Michigan District Health Department will soon begin blood lead testing for children enrolled in Medicaid and the WIC Program. This test will be in conjunction with their regular WIC health and nutrition risk screening appointment. Children who are found to have elevated blood levels of lead will be educated on reducing lead exposure in their environment.

In addition families will be provided education to help decrease current high levels of blood lead if they are found after testing. All parents are encouraged to ask their child's medical care provider to test for lead poisoning if you have any risk factors for lead exposure in any of your child's environment.

Childhood lead poisoning remains a major environmental health problem in the United States, and it is entirely preventable. Do your part by preventing children's exposure to lead hazards among your family and your community. Together we can make lead poisoning history.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Isabella, Gladwin, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties