



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department

“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109

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National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 21-27, 2007

In the news this summer, we learned that the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalled millions of toys after determining they contained excessive amounts of lead. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates nearly half a million children living in the U.S. have blood lead levels high enough to cause significant damage to their health and impair their ability to learn.

Despite the ever present threat of lead in the environment today, lead poisoning is entirely preventable. To increase awareness of childhood lead poisoning prevention, the Central Michigan District Health Department is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW) October 21—27 along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

This year's NLPPW theme, "Protect Our Most Valuable Resource—Our Children," helps parents learn the importance of preventing lead exposure *before* children are harmed. "Lead can be removed from a lead poisoned child," states Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for Central Michigan District Health Department, "but the damage caused by lead poisoning will remain for a lifetime."

In conjunction with national lead poisoning prevention efforts, Central Michigan District Health Department offers blood lead screenings for children enrolled in the Women, Infants, Children (WIC) Program with Medicaid insurance coverage. Children with other medical insurance coverage can be tested for lead by contacting their primary medical provider.

There are many ways parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead. First and foremost, hazards in a child's environment must be identified and controlled or removed safely. Sources of lead include:

- Dust and chips from paint in homes built before 1978
- Ground soil around homes painted with lead paint
- Various imported goods, such as toys, Mexican candy, traditional ceramics, children's jewelry
- Some drinking water – from lead pipes
- Folk remedies (such as Greta, Azarcon, Ghasard, Ba-baw-san)

More information about preventing childhood lead poisoning is available from your local health department branch office or by logging onto www.cmdhd.org.