

WHAT IS LEAD?

Lead is a metal that has many uses. When lead gets into the body, it is a poison that harms people. This is called lead poisoning. Most children come in contact with lead every day in their homes. Lead can hide in chipping paint and in dust. Lead poisoning can be prevented. You can protect your children.



WHY SHOULD MY CHILD BE TESTED?

Lead poisoning is most dangerous for children younger than six because they are still developing. It can affect their learning and cause very serious health problems.

HOW ARE LEAD TESTS DONE?

The doctor will take a small amount of blood from your child's arm (a "venous blood test") or finger (a "fingerstick test"). If the level of lead in your child's blood is high from a fingerstick test, a venous blood test may be needed to know if your child is lead poisoned.

RHODE ISLAND LAW REQUIRES ALL CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN SIX TO BE TESTED FOR LEAD POISONING ONCE A YEAR.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MY CHILD FROM LEAD POISONING?

No matter what the level of lead is in your child's blood, you should:

Keep your children away from lead in your home.

- » Keep your children away from chipping paint.
- » Move heavy furniture in front of areas with chipping paint or cover the paint with contact paper or duct tape. Never vacuum paint chips.
- » Clean dusty areas of your house with a wet mop or cloth, especially around windows. Use warm soapy water and rinse often.

Give your children healthy foods that will protect them from lead.

- » Give your children three meals and one or two low fat snacks a day. Bagels, fruits, vegetables, and graham crackers are some good low-fat snacks.
- » Give your children foods that have a lot of iron, such as meats and fish, lentils, beans, green leafy vegetables, peas, and dried fruit, such as raisins. Some cereals have iron added.
- » Give your children foods that have a lot of calcium. Milk, cheese, and yogurt have the most. Vegetables, such as spinach, kale, collard greens, turnip greens, and mustard greens also have calcium. Some juices and other foods have calcium added.

Talk to your doctor about the next time your child should have a lead test.

PREVENT LEAD POISONING IN YOUNG CHILDREN

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL THE HEALTH INFORMATION LINE AT 401-222-5960 OR VISIT WWW.HEALTH.RI.GOV/LEAD



UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD'S LEAD TEST RESULTS



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What does my child's blood level mean?

The amount of lead in your child's blood, called a blood lead level, tells you if your child has been exposed to lead and if your child is lead poisoned. Even a small amount of lead can affect a child's health and learning.

What can I do if my child is lead poisoned?

If your child is lead poisoned, talk to your doctor about the help that is available for you and your child. The care and services your child needs depend on your child's blood lead level.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about lead poisoning and available resources, call the HEALTH Information Line at 401-222-5960 or visit www.health.ri.gov/lead

IF YOUR CHILD'S BLOOD LEAD LEVEL IS BELOW 5:

- » Your child's blood level is not high at this time.
- » Your child will need another lead test in a year.

What you can do:

- » Have your child tested every year.
- » Keep your child away from lead in your home.
- » Give your child healthy foods.

IF YOUR CHILD'S BLOOD LEAD LEVEL IS BETWEEN 5 AND 14:

- » Your child's blood level is high.
- » Your child will need another blood test in a few months.
- » You will receive information in the mail on how to prevent lead poisoning. A lead educator will call and offer to come to your home to answer your questions and help you make your home safe for your child.

What you can do:

- » Ask your doctor when your child should have another blood test.
- » Protect your child from lead in your home.
- » Give your child healthy foods. Children under five years old with high blood lead levels may be able to receive free healthy foods through the WIC program. Call the Health Information Line to find out more.

IF YOUR CHILD'S VENOUS BLOOD LEAD LEVEL IS 15 OR HIGHER FOR THE FIRST TIME:

- » Your child is dangerously lead poisoned.
- » Your child will need another blood test in three months.
- » A lead educator will call and offer to come to your home to answer your questions and help you make your home safe for your child.
- » Your child may need treatment to bring down the level of lead in his or her blood, which will begin with a full check-up from your doctor or from a lead clinic. You and your doctor will then decide which treatment is best for your child. It may include medicine or iron and vitamin supplements to reduce the level of lead in your child's blood. If your child's lead level goes over 45, he or she may have to go to the hospital for more tests and treatment.



What you can do:

- » When a lead educator and lead inspector call and offer to come to your home, schedule these visits.
- » Ask your doctor about the help available to your child
- » Protect your child from lead in your home.
- » Give your child healthy foods. Children under five years old with high blood lead levels may be able to receive free healthy foods through the WIC program. Call the Health Information Line to find out more.
- » Lead poisoned children may have delayed development. The Early Intervention Program may be able to help you and your child. Call the Department of Human Services (DHS) at 401-462-5300 to find out more.

For More information on ways to lower your child' exposure to lead and learn about local resources you may qualify for, contact your local Lead Center :

Blackstone valley Community action 475-5028

Westbay Community Action 732-4660 x 148

Eastbay Community Action 437-0006 x 141

St. Joseph Hospital Lead Center 456-4310