

What Is Childhood Lead Poisoning?

Lead poisoning is the #1 environmental health threat to children.

Lead is a heavy metal that can be found in paint, dust, soil and water. Our bodies do not need lead to function but when lead gets into our bodies, especially bodies of young children, it can cause serious damage. At low levels of lead exposure, children may not look or feel sick. If not found early, lead poisoning can cause brain damage and behavioral problems, including loss of intelligence, Attention Deficit Disorder and other growth, speech, hearing and learning problems. In severe cases, lead poisoning can result in seizures, coma and even death.

What Are the Symptoms?

Most children who have lead poisoning do not have any symptoms.



Symptoms that may appear include headaches, stomach aches, loss of appetite, weight loss, fatigue, and crankiness and often are confused with other childhood illnesses. A blood lead test, done through a simple finger prick is the only sure way to tell if a child is lead poisoned.

Is My Child At Risk?

It is estimated that more than 7,000 children in Allen County may be at risk for lead poisoning.

Your child may be at risk for childhood lead poisoning if he or she lives in or visits a home built before 1978. Take a look at the Lead Poisoning Risk Assessment Questionnaire on the next panel of this pamphlet. If you answer "yes" to any of the questions, your child may be at risk and should be tested.

Lead Poisoning Risk Assessment Questionnaire

If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, it is in the best interest of your child to have a lead screen.

1. Is the child between the ages of 1-6 and eligible for or receiving benefits from WIC and/or Medicaid?
 Yes or Unknown No
2. Does the child live in or regularly visit a ZIP code determined to be at high risk for lead poisoning (46802, 46803, 46806, 46807, 46808)?
 Yes or Unknown No
3. Does the child live in or regularly visit a home or day care center built before 1978 with peeling and/or chipping paint?
 Yes or Unknown No
4. Does the child have a sibling or playmate being treated for lead poisoning?
 Yes or Unknown No
5. Does the child live with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead? (This includes home repairs, auto repairs, furniture refinishing, firing ranges, casting lead fishing sinkers and boat repairs.)
 Yes or Unknown No
6. Does the child live near a busy street, an active lead smelter or other industry likely to release lead?
 Yes or Unknown No
7. Does the family use imported or glazed ceramics for food preparation, storage or dinnerware? Are there any home remedies used such as tahananakha?
 Yes or Unknown No
8. Does the child have medical findings consistent with lead poisoning? (This includes any developmental delay, speech delay, anemia, hyperactivity, stomach aches, trouble with being potty trained or undiagnosed seizures.)
 Yes or Unknown No

Visit the
Allen County CLPP's
website at www.allencounty-clpp.com
for links to lead-related websites.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:
260-449-8600

Allen County

C L P P

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

www.allencounty-clpp.com

1 East Main Street • 5th Floor
Fort Wayne, IN 46802
260-427-1391 fax

Get the Lead Out of Allen County:

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning



LEAD POISONING

THE EFFECTS CAN BE DEVASTATING

Test your Home. Test your Child.

What Causes Childhood Lead Poisoning?

- The most common source of lead poisoning is dust and paint chips from old lead-based paint, which may be present in any home built before 1978. **Lead-based paint is present in an estimated 24 million U.S. homes.**
- Lead also can be found in bare dirt in the yard and in the water if there are old pipes in the house.
- Hobbies such as making stained glass windows or refinishing furniture can provide exposure to lead.
- Some jobs have sources of lead exposure including remodeling, recycling centers, and battery factories.
- Some Asian and Hispanic home health remedies for stomach upset and ethnic food containers also have lead.

Why Should I Be Worried About Childhood Lead Poisoning?

The damage done to a child's brain is irreversible. Lead poisoned children have a greater likelihood of never realizing their full potential.

Lead poisoning is extremely dangerous for children. Babies and young children are at highest risk because they put objects in their mouths and lead that may be present in and on these objects is easily absorbed into their bodies, especially their nervous system.

Because their bodies are growing, the health effects for children under 7 are more serious than those for adults. Children can be poisoned at much lower levels than adults.



What Should I Do If I Suspect My Child Has Been Lead Poisoned?

Have your child tested for lead poisoning.

Talk to your child's doctor to get a blood lead test or call 449-8600 for information on free lead screening locations in our area. **Call the Allen County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 449-8600 for more information on keeping your children safe.**

What Are the Complications from Childhood Lead Poisoning?

Exposure to lead, even at low levels, can cause serious problems for young children. The most concerning risk is to brain development where irreversible damage may occur.

Health problems for children may include:

- Learning disabilities
- Speech, language, and behavior problems
- Hearing damage
- Nervous system and kidney damage
- Poor muscle coordination
- Decreased muscle and bone growth

How Do You Treat Childhood Lead Poisoning?

The most important thing is to stop your child's exposure to lead.

The Allen County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will assist families whose children have been identified with elevated blood lead levels find potential lead hazards and will offer specific suggestions on how to take care of them.

What Can Be Done to Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning?

Fixing older homes that have deteriorated paint is the most important thing a family and a community can do to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

- Adults should check the home for potential danger areas, such as chipping and peeling paint, crumbling plaster, indoor dust and bare outdoor dirt that may have lead in it.

- If you think your home may have lead hazards, you should have your home tested for lead.
- Any peeling and chipping paint should be fixed and the paint chips cleaned up.



Do not try to do this on your own unless you know how to work with lead-based paint in a safe way! Many children are poisoned each year because their parents or contractors conduct unsafe remodeling and renovation activities on their homes.

- Children should not be allowed in the house until the work is finished and the area is properly and thoroughly cleaned.

Call 449-8600 for more information about how to safely fix your home.

Following these other hints will help protect your children:

- Keep your home clean and free of dust and paint chips.
- Feed your children a diet high in vitamin C, iron and calcium.
- Wash your child's hands often, especially after they play, before they eat and when they go to bed.



Test Your Home Test Your Child