



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local News Media
From: Central Michigan District Health Department
RE: Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 22-28)
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Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 22-28, 2023

Get the Facts. Get Your Child Tested. Get Your Home Tested. "Together, we can prevent lead exposure!"

Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) is promoting Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to raise awareness about lead poisoning and encourage preventive actions. CMDHD recommends that all children under the age of 6 be screened for elevated blood lead levels. You can obtain blood lead screenings from your primary care provider or at one of our health department offices. Screening is covered by most insurances and is free for children with Medicaid coverage. If elevated levels are detected, a nurse case manager works with the family to help reduce blood lead levels and help determine the source of lead poisoning, so it can be eliminated.

"CMDHD provides blood lead screening and lead exposure education, and we work with families to eliminate lead exposure from household items," said Kelly Conley, CMDHD Personal Health Director. "Even a very low level of lead in a child's blood is linked to adverse effects on intellect, concentration, and academic achievement." No safe blood lead level has been identified, and intervention is needed for children with higher levels of lead. Here are important facts about lead exposure and its potentially harmful effects:

- **Lead is toxic, especially in young children.** When lead is inhaled or swallowed, it can result in damage to the brain and nervous system. That damage can cause learning problems, behavioral problems, slow growth, slow development, hearing problems, and/or speech problems.
- **Children younger than 6 years of age are particularly vulnerable to lead exposure.** Their bodies are growing rapidly. Young children also tend to put their hands or other objects into their mouths. These items may be contaminated with lead dust.
- **Lead poisoning is preventable!** The key is keeping children from coming into contact with lead.

Please visit us online at www.cmdhd.org.

- About **3.3 million American households with children under 6 years old have lead exposure hazards** from lead in deteriorated paint, or dust, or soil. This number includes 2.1 million low-income households.
- **Lead can be found inside and outside of the home.** A common source of exposure is from deteriorated lead-based paint, which was used inside and outside many homes and other buildings built before 1978. Children can be exposed by swallowing or inhaling lead dust from old cracked or chipped paint, eating paint chips, or chewing on surfaces coated with lead dust and/or lead-based paint, such as windowsills.
 - Lead exposure can happen during renovation, repair, and painting jobs in a pre-1978 home.
 - Lead may also be found in drinking water. The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures. Find out if your home’s pipes are lead with the Protect Your Tap guide at www.epa.gov/protectyourtap.
 - Lead naturally occurs in soil. In many places across the United States, the amount of lead in soil is significantly higher than naturally occurring levels, due to industrial and human activities. Lead-contaminated soil can become a source of lead exposure if accidentally ingested during outdoor play or gardening or brought into the house on shoes or other garments.
- **Other potential sources of lead** include items made in other countries, such as toys, painted furniture, jewelry, health remedies, foods, cosmetics, powders, makeup, pottery, porcelain, and collectibles that are passed from one generation to another.
- **Some children are at greater risk for lead exposure than others**, including those who are:
 - living with adults whose jobs or hobbies involve working with lead.
 - members of certain cultural groups.
 - recent immigrants, refugees, or international adoptees.
 - living in poorly maintained homes or apartments built before 1978.
- **Children and pregnant people may crave nonfood items that may contain lead**, such as soil, clay, or crushed pottery. This condition is called pica.

Visit <https://www.cmdhd.org/lead> to learn more about CMDHD’s lead screening for children. Call 989-314-7570 to make a child lead screening appointment with Personal Health.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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