



ALPHAbet Soup

American Lead Poisoning Help Association

For Parents, By Parents

Lead Poisoning 101

Lead is a poison that affects children from conception through the age of 6. Lead is similar to calcium and iron as a molecule, and deposits in a growing child's bones, brain, skull – all the parts of the body, and inhibits growth. There is no safe level of lead in the human body. Children with elevated lead levels do not appear “sick” even though the child may have reoccurring or chronic illnesses similar to the common cold. **Lead can only be diagnosed by a blood test.** The effects of lead on a child are permanent.

Lead was used in paint for over a century, and if old paint is chipping, peeling or chalking, or if there are renovations disturbing older layers of paint, there is a

lead hazard that needs to be addressed. Houses built before 1950 have the greatest chance of

containing layers of lead paint on porches, windows, doors, chair rails, and other high-moisture areas. Lead paint is no longer used in US residential homes, but still in marine paints, car paints, bridges, water towers, and road paints.

Lead was also used for plumbing – older buildings may have lead pipes and lead solder. Let your water run for 2 minutes every morning to ‘flush out’ the



Lead paint cracking, and chips in a window well.
Photo—Sara Kerley

lines, as lead can poison your drinking water.

Use cold water for cooking. Boiling

water will not remove lead – some water filtration units do remove lead – check the label.

And then there is Unleaded gasoline. The US phased-out lead in gasoline in the early 1990s; however, roads, sidewalks, shoulders are contaminated with 70 years worth of leaded gas emissions. Playgrounds, parking lots and road shoulders can contain high levels of lead in dust and soil.

The Effects of Lead on Children

Elevated lead levels primarily occur today due to exposure from lead dust, gas emissions, deteriorating paint or renovations in homes built before 1978, or from lead solder & pipes in older plumbing. As a retardant, lead obstructs every-

thing it comes in contact with: moisture, mold inhibitor, or brain activity and growth.

As an element, it 'tricks' the human body into absorption into the blood, bones, brain, and skull, replacing calcium

and iron in the developmental years. If left untreated, children with elevated lead levels are more susceptible to lower IQs, behavioral problems, and learning disabilities; in severe exposure it can ultimately lead to convulsions, coma, or death.

ALPHA-New Jersey

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Special points of interest:

- ☺ Lead Poisoning 101— where does the lead come from?
- ☺ Leadie Eddie Program highlights
- ☺ Lead News from around the world
- ☺ ALPHA Parent group site—get invited!

Inside this issue:

Stomp Out Lead NJ	2
Leadie Eddie	2
Lead Recalls	2
Lead News	3
ALPHA Lead group	3
AAP Lead State-	3
Risk Assess	4

Leadie Eddie: Educating the Children

"Hello boys and girls, my name is Leadie Eddie..." Throughout day-cares and preschools in New Jersey, children are meeting Leadie Eddie and the interactive education offered through Gateway Northwest Maternal & Child Health Network.

Leadie Eddie is a purple Muppet-like puppet who discusses lead education with children ages 3-5. He also has an identical twin, Pedro Plomo. Leadie talks to children about eating healthy foods, washing their hands, and taking their shoes off before going inside their homes.

Children watch a video featuring Elmo, Oscar the Grouch and Maria

from Sesame Street called "Lead Away," about lead poisoning. Children also learn about getting a lead screen.

The Leadie Eddie program aims to make children aware of lead dust, which is like germs—invisible! Children also receive a Leadie Eddie coloring book to take home.



Parents living in Mercer County are welcome to attend meetings in the following Head Start locations:

1/09—Hamilton—169 Wilfred Ave

1/10—Ewing—320 Hollowbrook Dr

1/17—Hightstown—21 Rev Wm Powell Dr

1/18—Hamilton —1801 E State St Ext

1/26—Trenton—701 Roebling Ave

Parent interactive meetings begin at 6 PM and last around an hour. Parents only please. Learn about lead and how to identify lead hazards within your homes, where to test your child, and what products contain lead today.

Contact Leann 609-332-6730 or Lhowell@gatewaymch.org for more information on Mercer County locations parent meetings, or to schedule an event for your group or community. Call 973-268-2292 to arrange the program in the Newark area.

This program is only available in specific areas, due to grant funding. Other programs may be available through your local or county health or WIC clinics.

Lead Recalls from the Consumer Product Safety Commission

Lead is frequently used in many imported products which are used by children. Recalls by the CPSC for high lead content include:

Sidewalk chalk—recent recalls posted include Target and Toys R Us chalks:
www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml04/04032.html

Jewelry—lead may be used as the metal charm or trinket in costume jewelry. This warning is for Dollar General, but the warning is common with several 'dollar' type store jewelry:
www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml05/05278.html

Disney red sunglasses—sold from November 2004 through June 2005:

www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml05/05254.html

Painted furniture—yellow and red are the primary lead colors imported. This recall is for chairs sold from July 2003 through June 2004 by Meco:

www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml04/04202.html

Other CPSC recalls for lead include:

Lead-wick candles—check the label:
www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml76/76086.html
if does not say "lead-free wick" or

cotton wick, your candle can burn lead into the air of your home.

Imported vinyl window blinds—This recall is for Ace Hardware, but another common problem. Lead dust is formed as the vinyl deteriorates in the sun.

www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml00/00122.html

For more information on other CPSC recalls, check out their website on-line at www.cpsc.gov.

Free Lead Dust Wipes for NJ Expectant Parents

Lead poisoning is one of the most serious health problems facing the children of New Jersey. Lead poisoning can cause lifelong damage. Even tiny amounts of lead dust can harm a child's developing brain, affecting intelligence and behavior.

An effective way to prevent childhood lead poisoning is to identify whether or not there is lead-based paint in the home before a child is exposed.

Under a new program from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, pregnant women will receive testing kits to determine the presence of harmful lead dust in their home. This provides expectant parents with important information they can use to protect their child and, if needed, implement lead-hazard control measures to prevent exposure.

Wipe Out Lead NJ provides eligible expectant parents with free testing kits to

check their homes for harmful levels of lead paint dust, the most common source of childhood lead poisoning. For more information about the program call 888-722-2903.

Wipe Out Lead NJ provides eligible expectant parents with free testing kits to check their homes...

Lead News from Around the World

All Trick, No Treat for K-Mart

A St Louis K-Mart hid lead warning tags on Halloween masks, claims warnings "not needed." Although the masks were not recalled, the warning labels were covered in black marker and a black sticker. 10.21.05

www.ksdk.com/news/news_article.aspx?storyid=86617

Lead in Children's Lunch Boxes

Soft-sided vinyl lunch boxes have been tested with high levels of lead. The CPSC has not issued a recall, but an informative webpage with photos is through the Center for Environmental Health.

www.cehca.org/lunchboxes.htm

CVS holiday mugs

Astute SC shopper ML Tanner dis-

covered that CVS has 2 different types of mugs on sale that contain the following warning: The materials used as colored decorations on the exterior of (this product) contains lead, a chemical known to the State of California to cause birth defects or other reproductive harm." The footed mugs had a Santa, snowman, tree or polar bear sold for \$4.99, the REALLY big mugs had a picture of a log cabin and sold for \$3.99. The warning was *not* on the matching plates or candy dishes. Made in China, distributed through CVS.

Lead Hair Dye

Health Canada banning key ingredient in men's hair dye—lead acetate, a known carcinogen. Lead acetate is commonly used in Grecian Formula.

Mexican Candies

Dangerous levels of lead found in 112 distinct brands of candy, and public health workers and parents never knew. Lead is either in the wrappers, printed with ink containing lead, in the chili or tamarind, which can contain lead from pesticides, fertilizers and dirt, or in the lead glaze on small clay pots. View the [Orange County Register's](#) six-part investigation and photos of candies:

www.ocregister.com/investigations/lead/

The next [ALPHAbet Soup](#) newsletter is Spring 2006—deadline for submissions: February 1, 2006. Email any suggestions, comments or articles to Leann Howell, Mercer County Education & Outreach Coordinator, CLEARCorps-NJ/Gateway Northwest MCHN

Lhowell@gatewaymch.org

ALPHAlead Parent-Only Group Site

Parents learning about lead poisoning through their children's exposure have questions—we all do. The Goal of the American Lead Poisoning Help Association is to network parents of lead poisoned children together.

Through Yahoo! groups, ALPHAlead is available for chat,

The ALPHA network is comprised of parents in TX, ME, NC, NJ, MI, OH, CT and PA, and growing strong.

group email postings, file sharing, outreach ideas, and as always, Lead 101. You can request an invitation by going to the site: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/ALPHALEAD/> or email info@alphalead.org. Please include 1-2 sentences about how lead is affecting your family.

The ALPHA network is comprised of parents in TX, ME, NC, NJ, MI, OH, CT and PA, and growing strong. We are looking to develop a parent group in Trenton, NJ as we get funded and

incorporated.

Issues discussed range from children's behavior and educational issues to conference and training opportunities. Be connected! Stay connected with other parents



Contact info@alphalead.org about advertising here...

AAP on Children and Lead Exposure

In October 2005, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a Policy Statement on Lead Exposure in Children: Prevention, Detection, and Management. In short, AAP concluded that lead levels less than 10 micrograms per deciliter may affect impair learning. *"Most US children are at sufficient risk that they should have their blood lead concentration measured at least once."*

Levels less than 10 micrograms per deciliter can cause decreased IQ, ADD/

ADHD and aggressive behavior problems if not treated and addressed.

Have your child tested for lead. Insurance covers the cost of the test, treatment and medication (if needed). It is NJ state law to test children for lead. If you checked any of the assessment questions on page 4, [demand a test](#). Only **you** can convince the doctor to screen your child if he/she won't test.

If the lead level remains elevated due to constant, silent exposure, your child will

suffer permanent damage. Lead is one poison that you can't lock away from children under the sink with other household toxins, and it may be throughout your home, right within your child's reach. Don't learn about lead after it's too late for your baby.

Be lead smart—for your child's sake.

ALPHA-New Jersey

American Lead Poisoning Help Association

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Coming soon:
www.alphalead.org



Contact info@alphalead.org for newsletter or web advertising rates

Risk Assess your Child for Lead

If your child is receiving Medicaid (state-funded) insurance, it is not only the doctor's responsibility to test your child, but it is New Jersey state law. There is a series of questions the doctor should ask you at the yearly visit to determine if your child is at-risk for having lead exposure. If you answer **yes** or **I don't know** to any question, your child may be exposed to lead.

Does your child:

- Live in or regularly visit a house built before 1960 with peeling or chipping paint?* This could include the home of a baby-sitter or relative, a daycare center or preschool.
- Live in or regularly visit a house built before 1960 with planned, recent (within the past year) or ongoing reno-*

vation/remodeling activity?

- Have a brother or sister, a playmate or other household member with a confirmed elevated blood level?*
- Live with an adult whose job or hobby involves exposure to lead?*
- Live near an active lead smelter, battery recycling plant, or other industry likely to release lead?*
- Have a history of possible prenatal exposure to lead (child's mother had elevated blood lead during pregnancy)?*
- Have iron deficiency anemia, sickle cell disease, developmental delay or behavioral problems?*
- Have a habit of eating dirt, paint chips, or other non-food items?*
- Have excessive mouthing habits that are not age appropriate?*

- Have an elevated blood lead test of 10 micrograms per deciliter or higher when last tested?*

If you answered "Yes" or "I don't know" to **any** of these questions, your child may be at risk for elevated lead levels. Talk to your child's doctor, pediatrician or clinic about blood testing your child for lead.

Children under the age of 6 are at the greatest risk for lead exposure; there are no visible signs of lead poisoning. Lead crosses the placenta and also contaminates breast milk. Lead in adults can cause miscarriages and abnormal sperm counts.