

LEAD POISONING FACT SHEET

The Scary Statistics

535,000 children ages 1 to 5 diagnosed with elevated blood lead (EBL) levels of 5 µg/dl or higher¹

Any home built
before 1978
may contain lead paint

37.1 million
homes contain lead paint²

23.2 million homes contain prominent lead hazards²

Effects of Lead Poisoning

Children with Low Levels:

- Learning disabilities
- Decreased intelligence (I.Q.)
- Speech development problems
- Hearing loss
- Hyperactivity
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Aggressive, violent behavior

Adults with Low Levels

- Fatigue/irritability
- Impaired concentration
- Nausea/Constipation
- Depression
- Premature birth or low birth weight
- 46% increased rate of early mortality
- 16-19% increased risk of cardiovascular disease

The new CDC lead
reference level is

5 µg/dl

though any EBL level is
reason for concern.¹

Children with High Levels:

- Reduced motor control and balance
- Developmental disabilities
- Coma
- Convulsions
- Death

Adults with High Levels

- Hearing loss
- Anemia
- Hypertension
- Miscarriages or stillbirths
- Impotence
- Seizures
- Death

Get Help

Free Services Available to Eligible Families

- Health and safety assessment
- Lead hazard reduction
- Window and door replacement
- Home safety education
- Legal services
- Tenants' rights assistance
- Housing Choice Voucher program
- Asthma trigger reduction
- Pest management
- Mold remediation

For help or more information, please contact:



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Did You Know?

The Costs of Lead Poisoning

- Childhood lead poisoning results in an average loss of lifetime earnings of \$723,000 per child²
- Developmental issues due to lead poisoning lead to increased costs for special education and the criminal justice system

Societal Implications of Lead Poisoning:

- A child is estimated to lose two IQ points for each 10 µg/dL increase in blood lead level⁴
- Effects are long term and often irreversible

Juvenile Delinquency:

- Lead exposure is associated with an increased risk for antisocial and delinquent behavior⁵
- Children who are lead poisoned are seven times more likely to drop out of school and six times more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.⁶
- Lead affects neurotransmitters which affect cognition and influence impulse control

Cost Savings from Lead Poisoned Prevention:

- Each dollar invested in lead paint hazard control results in a return of \$17–\$221 or a net savings of \$181–269 billion³
- Lead poisoning prevention results in cost savings from reductions in crime and delinquency and reductions in special education costs

Federal Health Care & Children at Risk⁷:

- Elevated blood lead levels remain a significant problem for children served by federal health care programs (Medicaid, WIC, Health Centers Program)
- An estimated 400,000 children aged 1-5 in federal health care programs are not being screened for lead
- Lead testing screening rates are adversely affected by lack of oversight, funding and other problems

Required Screening: Medicaid & HCFA Policy:

- All children eligible for Medicaid are required to have a blood lead test at the ages of 12 and 24 months
- All Medicaid children between 36-72 months must receive a blood lead test if they have not received one previously

References

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Childhood Lead Poisoning Surveillance Data. "Blood Lead Levels in Children Aged 1–5 Years — United States, 1999–2010," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 5, 2013; 62(13):245-248. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6213a3.htm>
- 2 National Center for Environmental Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Grosse et al. "Economic Gains Resulting from the Reduction in Children's Exposure to Lead in the United States," Environmental Health Perspectives 110:563–569, June 2002.
- 3 Gould E. "Childhood lead poisoning: Conservative estimates of the social and economic benefits of lead hazard control," Environmental Health Perspectives 117: 1162-1167, July 2009
- 4 Schwartz, J. "Low-Lead Level Exposure and Children's IQ: A Meta-analysis and Search for a Threshold," Environ. Res. 65:42-55, 1994.
- 5 Needleman, H. L., Riess, J. A., Tobin, M., Biesecker, G. & Greenhouse, J.B. "Bone Lead Levels and Delinquent Behavior," JAMA, vol 275 No 5. February 7, 1996.
- 6 "Childhood Exposure to Lead: A Common Cause of School Failure." Needleman HL. Phi Delta Kappan. September 1992.
- 7 U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Federal Health Care Programs Are Not Effectively Reaching At-Risk Children," HEHS-99-18: Published: Jan 15, 1999.

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