

FREE Teacher and Family Resources

# Keep Our Children Safe From Lead!



## How to Use These Materials

- Photocopy and distribute the Parent Letter handout to parents.
- Photocopy and share the handouts with parents (pages 3 and 4).

# Dear Teacher,



You have a very special role in the lives of the children you care for. You see children and their parents almost every day, but what you may not see is that some of the children may be sick from the unseen danger of lead. Lead is dangerous for children ages 6 and younger because it can cause damage to the brain and other health problems. A checkup at the doctor is the only way to know whether a child has lead poisoning.

All children are at risk for lead poisoning. All children must be tested for lead at: 9–18 months...best at 1 year, and 18–26 months...best at 2 years.

Please note: Any child under the age of 6 years who has never been tested for lead should be tested immediately.

A doctor may do more testing if a parent answers “yes” or “I don’t know” to any of the following risk questions:

- Is your child now living in (or being cared for in) a building built before 1978?
- Is your child now living in (or being cared for in) a building built before 1978 that is being remodeled?
- Does your child live with an adult whose job or hobby involves lead? (For example, painters, home improvement workers, and fishermen.)
- Have you ever been told your child has high levels of lead in his or her blood?

Inside this booklet is a handout to give to each parent you see every day. Please hand out this information sheet when you greet parents. This sheet will help parents understand where lead comes from and what they need to do to protect their children.

Thank you for promoting lead safety for all of New Jersey’s children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carole Johnson".

Carole Johnson, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Human Services



## What Can You Do Right Now?

In addition to the individual handout, there are also fact sheets that you can photocopy and hand out to parents. Please copy, read, and share these with the parents of the children in your care.

Make sure parents know the dangers of lead and why it is important to have their children tested for lead during a checkup with a doctor.

Also, make sure parents know that lead testing is FREE—private insurance, Medicaid, and NJ FamilyCare cover testing. Uninsured children can be tested FREE at local health departments.

Tell parents that low-fat diets high in fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin C help fight the effects of lead.

## Dear Parent,

We know that protecting your child and keeping your child healthy is important to you. Lead poisoning is a danger you need to know about. Your child may not look or feel sick, but he or she may have lead in his or her blood. Lead is dangerous for children ages 6 and younger because it can cause serious health problems. A checkup at the doctor is the only way to know whether your child has lead poisoning.

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**Protect your children—get them tested.**



Carole Johnson, Commissioner  
New Jersey Department of Human Services

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## Estimado padre/madre,

Sabemos que proteger a su hijo y mantenerlo saludable es importante para usted. El envenenamiento por plomo es un peligro que debe conocer. Quizás su hijo no parezca ni se sienta enfermo, pero puede tener plomo en la sangre. El plomo es peligroso para los niños de hasta 6 años porque puede causar graves problemas de salud. Un examen médico es el único modo de saber si su hijo sufre envenenamiento por plomo.

Todos los niños están expuestos al envenenamiento por plomo. Todos los niños deben hacerse un examen de verificación de presencia de plomo entre los:

9 a 18 meses...preferentemente al año, y

18 a 26 meses...preferentemente a los 2 años.

Tenga en cuenta que: Todos los niños menores de 6 años a los que nunca se les hayan hecho pruebas para detectar envenenamiento por plomo deben hacerse esa prueba de inmediato.

Es posible que el médico realice más pruebas si usted responde “sí” o “no sé” a cualquiera de las siguientes preguntas:

- ¿Su hijo vive (o su guardería está) en un edificio construido antes de 1978?
- ¿Su hijo vive (o su guardería está) en un edificio construido antes de 1978 que se está remodelando?
- ¿Su hijo vive con un adulto cuyo trabajo o afición implica el uso de plomo? (Por ejemplo, pintores, trabajadores en arreglos para el hogar y pescadores.)
- ¿Alguna vez le dijeron que su hijo tenía niveles altos de plomo en la sangre?

**Proteja a sus hijos—pida que les hagan análisis.**



Carole Johnson, Comisionada del Departamento de Servicios Humanos de Nueva Jersey

1. Wet-mop floors and wipe window frames, windowsills, and other surfaces weekly. Wipe in one direction only.

2. Don't let children chew on anything covered with lead paint.

3. Don't try to remove lead paint yourself.

4. Don't bring lead dust into your home. Teach children to play in sand or grassy areas instead of dirt.

5. Practice safe water habits. Let cold water run for one minute before drinking it or cooking with it.

6. Eat healthy. Don't store food in pottery or cans as they may contain lead.

7. Have your child tested for lead poisoning, even if he or she seems healthy.

## Protect Your Child from Lead Poisoning

### Proteja a su hijo contra el envenenamiento por plomo



1. Limpie los pisos, los marcos y el alféizar de las ventanas y otras superficies con un trapo húmedo al menos cada semana. Pase el trapo en una sola dirección.

2. No permita que sus hijos mastiquen nada cubierto con pintura a base de plomo.

3. No intente quitar usted mismo pintura a base de plomo.

4. No lleve polvo de plomo a su casa. Enseñe a sus hijos a jugar en áreas con arena o césped en lugar de tierra.

5. Tome recaudos al consumir agua. Deje correr el agua fría durante 1 minuto antes de beberla o usarla para cocinar.

6. Consuma alimentos saludables. No guarde comida en recipientes de barro o metal que pueden contener plomo.

7. Deben hacerse pruebas a su hijo para detectar envenenamiento por plomo, aunque parezca saludable.

Source: Adapted from "Lead Poisoning and Your Children," Oct. 2000, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics.

Help is just a phone call away: 1-800-222-1222 New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

NJPIES Web site: [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org)

Para obtener ayuda sólo tiene que llamar al: 1-800-222-1222 NJPIES, Sistema de Información y Educación sobre Venenos de Nueva Jersey Sitio Web del NJPIES: [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org)



## How do children get lead poisoning?

Children are surrounded by lead. Here are some of the ways children can get lead poisoning:

### Lead-Based Paint

The paint used in homes built before 1978 contained a lot of lead.

### Soil

Pollution and lead exhaust from cars remains on the ground. Paint on the outside of older buildings may chip and fall to the ground.

### Dust

Dust may contain lead, particularly around windowsills.

### Air

Dust containing lead may get into the air and be breathed in.

### Water

Water pipes in some homes may be joined together with metal (solder), which contains lead.

### Jobs and Hobbies

Auto mechanics and home repairers may work with lead. Lead is also found in materials used in hobbies like fishing, target shooting, and painting.

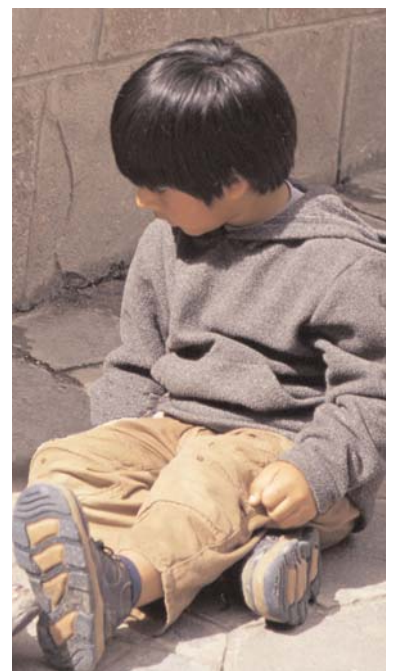
### Homemade Medicines or Makeup

Ingredients from other countries may contain lead. (For example, *azarcon*, *greta*, *surma*, *kohl*, or *pay-loo-ah*.)

## What are the health effects of lead poisoning?

It varies. Even low levels of lead can make children sick. Here are some of the health problems that can be caused by lead poisoning:

- Behavior problems
- Learning problems
- Hearing problems
- Damage to the brain
- Hyperactivity
- Anemia
- Slower growth and development
- At very high levels: seizures, coma, death





# Things You Can Do to Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning



Take children for regular checkups with a doctor.



Wash children's hands before meals, before sleeping, and after playing.



Wash toys after use and pacifiers often.



Do not allow children to play in the dirt.



Eat foods high in fiber, iron, calcium, and vitamin C.



Use cold water for cooking, drinking, and making baby formula.



Run cold water one minute before use.



Wet-mop floors and wipe window frames, windowsills, and other surfaces weekly. Wipe in one direction only.



Use a damp cloth when dusting.



Keep children away from chipping and peeling paint.



Leave shoes at the door.



If a family member works with lead (e.g., auto mechanic, construction worker, or fisherman), wash work clothes separately.