

“Does your child...”

- Live in or visit a house or apartment built before 1960? (This could include a daycare center, preschool, the home of a baby-sitter or relative, etc.)?
- Live in or regularly visit a house or apartment built before 1960 with previous, ongoing or planned renovation or remodeling?
- Have a family member with an elevated blood lead level?
- Interact with an adult whose hobby involves exposure to lead? (Furniture refinishing, making stained glass, electronics, soldering, automotive repair, making fishing weights and lures, reloading shotgun shells and bullets, firing guns at a shooting range, doing home repairs and remodeling, painting/stripping paint, antique/imported toys, and making potter)
- Live near a lead smelter, battery plant or other industry? (Ammunition/explosives, auto repair/auto body, cable/wire stripping, splicing or production, ceramics, firing range, leaded glass factory, industrial machinery/equipment, jewelry manufacturer or repair, lead mine, paint/pigment manufacturer, plumbing, radiator repair, salvage metal or batteries, steel metalwork, or molten metal/foundry work)
- Use pottery, ceramic, or crystal wear for cooking, eating, or drinking?

A “yes” to any of these questions means that your child is at risk for lead poisoning.

Lead poisoning is the number one environmental threat to children...and is the most preventable! Children who are lead poisoned do not look sick! When children show symptoms, the damage has been done. New data indicates that lead levels as low as 5ug/dl (micrograms per deciliter) can cause damage that is irreversible. The lead deposits in the brain and bones.

The Effects of Lead Poisoning

Toddlers and young children are more susceptible to the effects of lead because of their hand to mouth contact and the fact that their small bodies absorb the lead more readily than adults. Even small amounts of lead may cause speech delays, learning difficulties, behavioral or psychological problems, and hearing damage. Low levels of lead exposure can affect a child by causing fatigue, vomiting, colicky abdominal pain, and impair growth in a child, as well as cause anemia and kidney damage.

Pregnancy and Lead Poisoning

Pregnant women and their unborn babies are also at risk, because lead can pass from the mother to the fetus. Lead exposure can cause birth defects, brain damage, digestive and nerve disorders, and growth delays.

History of Lead Poisoning

Today, 30 years after residential lead-based paint was banned in 1978, Kansas children are still at risk for lead poisoning. According to the 2000 Census data, approximately 72% of the homes in Kansas were built before 1978. 82% of the homes in Saline County were built prior to 1978, with the strong probability of containing lead paint. The impact of lead poisoning on children is real, but silent, as it can damage their brain and limit their abilities. There are two typical causes in lead poisoning cases:

- Deteriorating paint in housing that is in poor condition from little or no maintenance.
- Remodeling activities conducted in pre-1978 homes in which no measures were taken to prevent lead-based paint exposure.

Testing for Lead Poisoning

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates approximately 6,400 Kansas children under the age of 6 years have elevated blood levels greater than or equal to 10 ug/dl (micrograms per deciliter). Early identification and treatment of lead poisoning reduces the risk that children will suffer permanent damage. A blood test is the only way to tell if a child has an elevated blood level. If a child is 6 months to 6 years of age, they should be tested for lead. Expectant mothers should also be tested for lead poisoning during their pregnancy.

Testing at the Health Department

The health department can do lead testing for children ages 6 months through 6 years through nursing clinic, during regular clinic hours. Call 785-826-6602 for an appointment. A fee maybe assessed for the service and Medicaid can be billed for the service. Lead testing can also be done with an appointment with WIC (Women, Infants & Children) Program for children under 5 years of age and pregnant women.

Prevention/Elimination

Preventive education and assistance in locating and eliminating the sources of lead poisoning in the home environment are provided.

Information

For additional information or questions call 785-826-6602 (Nursing Clinic) or 785-826-6604 (Environmental Health).

Web Resources

- * Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/lead.htm

1-800-311-3435

- * EPA National LEAD Information Center

www.epa.gov/lead/nlic.htm

1-800-424-LEAD

- * The Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning

1-800- 370-5323

- * Alliance For Healthy Homes

www.afhh.org

1-202-543-1147

- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

www.HUD.gov

1-202-708-1112

Kansas Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Prevention Program (HHLHPP)

www.kshealthyhomes.org

1-866-UNLEADEDKS (865-3233)

1000 S.W. Jackson St., Suite 330

Topeka Kansas 66612-1274

FAX: 1-785-296-5594

Email: lead@kdhe.state.ks.us