



Attention:

The Illinois Department of Public Health Lead Program has been notified that your child's blood lead test result was at or above 5 ug/dL. This is considered an elevated blood lead level and means that your child may have been exposed to lead. Your child will need a confirmatory venous blood lead test with their medical care provider as soon as possible.

My child was already tested for lead. Why does he or she need a confirmatory venous blood lead test?

Your child received a capillary (finger or heel stick) for their first lead test. Capillary testing is generally given as an initial test because they are less invasive. Sometimes the blood from a capillary test may show a false elevated result due to lead on the skin or in the environment (contamination). By collecting a venous blood test (blood from an arm vein) it will help confirm if there is lead in your child's blood stream. If the results of the venous blood lead test come back 5 ug/dL or higher, this would be considered high. A nurse case manager and environmental inspector will be assigned to your child. Proper steps will then be taken to identify sources of lead in your child's environment.

What could it mean if my child has been exposed to lead?

Lead is a poison. There is no safe level of lead in children. Damage caused by lead exposure is permanent and not reversible. Lead is harmful to the developing body of a child and may cause **learning problems, behavioral problems, lower intelligence, and slowed growth or attention problems**, which can cause problems later in school and into adulthood.

Other symptoms your child may experience include:

- Stomachaches
- Poor appetite
- Constipation
- Sleeping problems
- Irritability
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Weight loss
- Excessive tiredness
- Hyperactivity

In severe cases, coma and death can occur.

Common Ways Children are Exposed to Lead

- **Lead-based paint in pre-1978 homes:** Lead paint is the largest source of lead exposure. It can be on the inside or outside of homes, playground equipment, farm machinery, and toys.

Peeling or chipping paint in older homes is especially worrisome. Children are often exposed at windows and porches where there is crumbling lead paint. Children eating lead-paint chips can swallow a large amount of lead very quickly.

- **Contaminated dust from lead paint:** Dust can stick to hands, toys, food or other objects young children put in their mouth.

Lead paint on windows and other surfaces can create lead dust by opening and closing them. Lead dust can also be created from sanding or removing old paint and wallpaper.

- **Soil:** Lead in soil does not go away, but is a permanent hazard. Older outside painted surfaces may cause lead contamination of the soil. Leaded gasoline used in the past may have contaminated soil; especially if you live near a major highway. Street dust often contains lead from soil. Children can be exposed to lead in soil from playing in it or from being tracked into the home on shoes or pets.
- **Water:** Old water pipes made of lead, brass fixtures that contain lead solder, or a holding tank that contains lead.
- **Occupation/Hobbies.** Certain hobbies or occupations can expose people to lead and that lead dust can be brought home on clothing or shoes.
- **Products made outside the U.S.:** Items such as spices or medicines, ceremonial powders, glazed pottery, make up, toys, and jewelry.

Ways to Reduce Your Child's Exposure to Lead

- Frequently clean your home using soap and water; especially floors, counter tops and window sills.
- Clean up paint chips and peeling paint by using soap and water and using a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Wash children's hands, mouth, face, and toys often.
- Take shoes off before entering the home so that lead dust is not tracked inside.
- Feed your child healthy meals and snacks with calcium, Vitamin C, and iron sources. Feeding your child often throughout the day will keep your child feeling full and less likely to put non-food items in their mouth.
- Do not serve or store food in pottery made outside the United States.
- Do not use home remedies, ceremonial powders, folk medicines, and imported spices.
- If someone in the home has a job or hobby involving lead, remove clothing and wash exposed skin before holding or playing with children. Wash work/hobby clothing separately from other clothes.
- Keep children and pregnant women out of the house during renovations or remodeling. Do not allow them to re-enter the home until the work has been completed and the home has been well cleaned.
- Use a Licensed Lead Abatement Contractor to do remodeling and abatement work. Find a licensed contractor at dph.illinois.gov/illinoislead.