

LEAD-FREE KIDS FOR A HEALTHY FUTURE
NATIONAL LEAD POISONING PREVENTION WEEK OCTOBER 24-30TH

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week's theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of testing your children and home, and learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects.

Last year, 17 Idaho children tested positive for high levels of lead in their blood. "Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body and is especially harmful to children", says Kara Stevens, Environmental Health and Injury Prevention Program Manager. "We know children's growing bodies absorb more lead, and their brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead."

If not detected early, health effects in children can include hyperactivity, aggressive behavior, learning disabilities, lowered IQ, speech delay, and hearing impairment. The good news is that lead poisoning is entirely preventable. The key is stopping children from coming into contact with lead and treating children who have been poisoned by lead.

The most common way lead gets in the body is from dust. Lead dust comes from deteriorating lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil that gets tracked into your home. Lead-based paint was used in more than 38 million homes until it was banned for residential use in 1978. More than half (62%) of Idaho homes were built before 1978 and could have lead-based paint. The older the home, the more likely it is to have lead. If you live in an older home with peeling or chipping paint, have recently remodeled an older home, live near or recreate near a lead smelter or mine site, or suspect exposure to other sources of lead (i.e., toys, pottery, lead sinkers), talk to your doctor about a simple blood lead test for your child. Idaho's Medicaid program and most health insurance plans cover lead testing.

Families who reside in homes built before 1978 should also consider the following:

- Have a lead inspection and/or risk assessment conducted by an EPA-certified firm to determine if there is lead paint present and what actions you need to take to protect your child;
- Hire remodelers and/or painters who work for EPA-certified firms;
- Damp mop floors, damp-wipe surfaces, and frequently wash a child's hands, pacifiers and toys to minimize exposure to lead;
- Keep children from chewing on window sills or other painted surfaces;
- Clean up paint chips immediately both inside and outside the house; and
- Ensure your children have a diet high in iron and calcium, to help reduce the amount of lead their body takes in.

For more information on lead, please call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD or visit www.epa.gov/lead. For a list of lead inspectors, risk assessors, or certified renovators, contact the Idaho Indoor Environment Program at 1-800-445-8647.