



"Your Local
Health Department"

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Nearly half a million children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels that may cause significant damage to their health, estimates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The estimate is based on children with a blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher using data from national surveys conducted in 2007-2008 and 2009-2010. Major sources of lead exposure to U.S. children include lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in deteriorating buildings. Children can also be exposed to lead from additional sources including contaminated drinking water, take-home exposures from a workplace, and lead in soil. Symptoms of lead poisoning can be silent and hard to recognize. Preventing lead poisoning before it happens is the best way to keep your family safe.

To increase the awareness of childhood lead poisoning prevention, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, along with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), CDC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW) October 22-28.

This year's NLPPW theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of getting your home tested, getting your child tested, and getting the facts. Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple things you can do to help protect your family:

1. Get your home tested. Find out how to minimize risks of lead exposure by hiring a certified professional to test older homes for lead.
2. Get your child tested. A simple blood test can detect lead. Consult your doctor for advice on testing your children.
3. Get the facts. Find out about the hazards of lead. Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in lead dust or by swallowing paint chips, foods, or soil that contains lead.

In observance of NLPPW, events such as free screenings, lead-awareness community events, and educational campaigns will be conducted nationwide. For more information, contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency at 517-279-9561 ext. 0110# www.bhsj.org, the MDHHS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program at 517-335-8350 www.michigan.gov/lead, the MDHHS Lead Safe Home Program at 866-691-5323 www.michigan.gov/leadsafe, or call 1-800-424-LEAD. Also, be sure to like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic/.