

## ***Lead Risk Assessment Structures and Children can be tested***

An estimated 80 to 85 percent of the houses in Richland County have lead, says Joe Evans, Director of Environmental Health at the Mansfield/Ontario/Richland County Health Department.

“Lead is recognized as a potential problem but not a hazard if the painted surfaces of the house are intact and not being renovated.”

The Health Department is responsible for Lead Risk Assessment for Richland County. Evans claims more testing will be done in accordance with a federal mandate requiring lead assessment for community development projects involving older homes.

“Any structure where there will be children of susceptible age will be tested to ascertain if lead is present or whether a hazard has been rectified before being occupied,” Evans says.

Lead testing of structures can be arranged by Environmental Health at 419-774-4520.

The Public Health Nursing Division of the Health Department is available for lead screening of children where needed or requested. Contact the clinic at 419-774-4700.

## ***What To Do Now***

**Get Your Child Away from the Lead.** The best way to do this is to move to a lead free home. However, if you are a tenant, this may involve costs that you do not believe you can afford. If you are a homeowner, such may not be feasible because of your investment in your home.

Should a child be found with elevated lead levels, a new state law requires an environmental lead investigation be conducted. Any identified lead hazard must be removed or a residence can be condemned and vacated.

**Do not try to remove the lead paint yourself.** Lead paint and other lead exposures in your environment, can only be safely removed by certified lead contractors. By trying to remove lead paint yourself, you are almost guaranteed to make the hazard worse, by stirring up lead chips, dust and fumes which may only be a marginal problem, before you start.

*For more information, talk to your pediatrician or call the National Lead Information Clearinghouse toll-free at 1-800-424-LEAD (1-800-424-5323).*



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## ***What Every Parent Should Know About***

# **Lead Poisoning in Children**



***Keeping your child safe from the  
health risks associated with  
lead poisoning***

*Lead poisoning is entirely preventable. However, nearly one million children living in the United States have lead levels in their blood that are high enough to cause irreversible damage to their health.*

### ***Affect on childhood health***

Childhood lead poisoning remains a major preventable environmental health problem in the United States. About a million children younger than 6 years of age in the United States have blood lead levels of at least 10 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL), a level high enough to adversely affect their intelligence, behavior and development. Minority and poor children are disproportionately affected.

Lead poisoning affects virtually every system in the body, and often occurs with no distinctive symptoms.

Lead can damage a child's

central nervous system, kidneys, and reproductive system and, at higher levels, can cause coma, convulsions, and death.

Even low levels of lead are harmful and are associated with decreased intelligence, impaired neurobehavioral development, decreased stature and growth, and impaired hearing acuity.



*Peeling lead-based paint is a major source of lead poisoning among children.*

### ***Facts to know***

- For children at risk for lead exposure, a simple blood test can prevent a lifetime spoiled by the irreversible damage caused by lead poisoning.
- One of the most important risk factors for lead exposure is the age

of housing. More than 80 percent of all homes built before 1978 in the U.S. have lead-based paint in them. The older the house, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.

- According to recent CDC estimates, 890,000 U.S. children age 1-5 have elevated blood lead levels, and more than one-fifth of African-American children living in housing built before 1946 have elevated blood lead levels. These figures reflect the major sources of lead exposure: deteriorated paint in older housing, and dust and soil that are contaminated with lead from old paint and from past emissions of leaded gasoline.

- Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and at very high levels, seizures, coma and even death.

- Children between 12 and 36 months of age have a lot of hand to mouth activity, so if there is lead in their homes, they are more likely to take it in than are older children.