

October 30, 2015



Dear Provider:

As you may be aware from recent news reports, elevated levels of lead have been found in lead pipes within the City of Flint's water system.

To help protect the children of Flint from the current lead in water exposure, the Genesee County Health Department and Michigan Department of Health and Human Services are contacting you to assist you in providing guidance to support your families.

Children can be exposed to lead from drinking water in that runs through lead pipes, old lead paint, soil, pottery, cosmetics and toys and some home remedies. Adult jobs and hobbies, like auto repair, stained glass and jewelry making, and ammunitions handling can also put children at risk if they touch clothing or play in areas where lead is found.

As a primary care provider, you play a critical role in helping to ensure that children and families exposed to lead receive the care and reassurances they need to manage the potential health impacts of lead poisoning.

Identification. Children suffering from lead poisoning often fail to present outward symptoms. However, early clinical symptoms can include anemia, anorexia, abdominal pain and constipation. Lead is a neuro-toxin, and exposure can result in violent and aggressive behaviors, lead to learning disorders, may cause Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and has been known to reduce IQ by as many as 5-8 points with levels as low as 10 ug/dL. Lead is metabolized through the gastrointestinal system similar to iron and calcium, with uptake rates depending on the size and weight of the child. The blood half-life of lead is short (approximately 1 month) but the bone half-life can extend into decades.

Due to multiple risk factors facing many residents in the City of Flint (including aging housing conditions and water quality), we recommend that all children under age 6 living in the City of Flint or living in homes that use Flint water, attending school or childcare in Flint, or who spend time with a caregiver in the City of Flint, receive a blood lead test. Blood lead testing should be done through a child's primary care doctor to ensure adequate short-term and long-term follow-up. ***Families should be encouraged to have their children tested immediately either at their doctor's office or the Genesee County Health Department.***

Management of Blood Lead Levels. The following guidance is provided for management of childhood blood lead levels:

- **BLL < 5 ug/dL**
 - A lead level of less than 5 mcg/dL is not typically cause for concern.
 - Provide education and anticipatory guidance to ensure that lead levels do not rise.
 - Consider retesting in 12 months based on risk factors or concerns.

- **BLL >5 ug/dL**
 - **Children with capillary results of 5 ug/dL and higher must have a confirmatory venous blood draw.**
 - Families should receive anticipatory guidance, nutrition counseling, instruction on safe cleaning techniques and appropriate follow-up care from their primary care provider.
 - In-home services including case management and environmental investigations are available for all children with lead levels greater than 5 ug/dL. Refer patients to the Genesee County Health Department for this service.
 - Children with confirmed venous testing results greater than 5ug/dL within the past 18 months must be retested based on Medicaid policy and AAP guidelines. (See attached “Provider Quick Reference). If a child has not been retested within these timeframes, retesting is recommended as soon as possible.
- **BLL > 44 ug/dL.**
 - **Children with capillary results of 5 ug/dL and higher must have a confirmatory venous blood draw.**
 - Lead levels over 44 ug/dL may require hospitalization. Consult with an expert at the Children’s Hospital of Michigan in Detroit for additional guidance.
 - Families should receive anticipatory guidance, nutrition counseling, instruction on safe cleaning techniques and appropriate follow-up care from their primary care provider.
 - In-home services including case management and environmental investigations are available for all children with lead levels greater than 5 ug/dL. Refer patients to the Genesee County Health Department for this service.
 - Children with confirmed venous testing results greater than 5ug/dL within the past 18 months must be retested based on Medicaid policy and AAP guidelines. (See attached “Provider Quick Reference). If a child has not been retested within these timeframes, retesting is recommended as soon as possible.

Reminder: All children covered by Medicaid must be tested at age 1 and 2.

Follow-up Care. As providers, there are steps you can take to help support your families:

1. Continue to inform and educate families regarding lead risks and preventative steps that they can take to minimize their risks.
2. Encourage your families to use filtered water for drinking, mixing formula and washing dishes. Families can contact 2-1-1 for information on free NSF Certified water filters.
3. Healthy nutrition is critical for lead-exposed children. Make sure your patients are consuming balanced diets high in iron, calcium and Vitamin C. If you have concerns about their nutrition, consider recommending a multivitamin with iron. WIC and SNAP provide assistance to parents and children who need fresh and healthy foods. Contact the Genesee County WIC office at (810) 237-4537 to learn more. In addition, SNAP offers a Double Bucks program that can provide healthy foods for less.
4. Breastfeeding is highly protective and encouraged. However, if the mother’s blood lead level rises above 40ug/dL or her level is greater than 20 ug/dL and the baby has a level above 5 ug/dL breastfeeding is not recommended.

5. Because lead is a neuro-toxin, children with lead poisoning need longitudinal follow-up and may require developmental and behavioral health intervention services. Continue monitoring your patients' development at every visit.
6. Consider additional wrap-around and support services that will benefit your patients such as early childhood home visiting programs, early head start and head start. Call 2-1-1 for more information.

Local Resources. Several local resources are available to you and your patients:

- Blood Testing. Patients are encouraged to contact their primary care provider for testing. The Genesee County Health Department also administers lead tests. Patients in need of transportation should contact 2-1-1 for assistance.
- Water Testing. Water testing is free through the City of Flint Water Testing Plant. Patients can call 810-787-6537 to learn more.
- WIC and SNAP provide assistance to parents and children who need fresh and healthy foods. Contact the Genesee County WIC office at (810) 237-4537 to learn more.
- Child Development. If you have concerns about a child's growth, development or learning contact 2-1-1 for a Home Visiting Program in your area.

Websites and contact information.

- Genesee County Health Department Lead Program
(810) 257-3833
www.gchd.us
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program
(888) 322-4453
www.michigan.gov/lead
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Lead Poisoning Prevention Video for Primary Care Providers
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnkjCW_yGaU&feature=youtu.be
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
www.epa.gov/lead
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site
www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead

These recommendations will stay in effect until the Genesee County Health Department lifts the restrictions on water usage.

Sincerely,



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