

October 27, 2015



Dear Parent,

To help make sure the children of Flint are safe from lead exposure, the Genesee County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services are providing answers to the following questions:

- Where does lead come from?
- What can I do to protect my family?
- Should I get my child tested for lead?
- Where can I find more information about lead?

Where does lead come from?

Elevated levels of lead have been found in the drinking water from lead pipes in the City of Flint. Kids can also be exposed to lead from old lead paint, soil, pottery, cosmetics and toys and some home remedies. Adult jobs and hobbies, like auto repair, stained glass, jewelry making and ammunitions handling can also put children at risk if they touch clothing or play in areas where lead is found. Lead is a serious health hazard, especially for small children who become lead poisoned when they eat, drink or breathe lead.

Should my child get a blood lead test? Children who live in the City of Flint, live in a home using City of Flint water, or who attend school, childcare or often spend time with a caregiver in the City of Flint should be tested for lead poisoning.

This should be done as soon as possible.

Where should I go to get a blood lead test for my child?

The best place to get your child's blood lead test is your doctor's office. Tests are covered by most health plans. Your doctor will follow up with you on lab tests and provide you with information on what to do next. Your child can also get a free lead test at the Genesee County Health Department. If you need transportation, contact 2-1-1 for help.

Understanding your child's lead test result.

A lead level below 5 means there is a little lead in your child's blood. Use the tips below to help keep your child safe. Your doctor may suggest retesting your child within the next 12 months to make sure the level does not go up.

A lead level of 5-44 means that your child has had some exposure to lead. Work with your doctor and local health department for further guidance on how to limit your lead exposure. Your doctor may retest your child in 1-3 months to make sure the level does not go up.

Children with very high levels of lead (**over 44**) may require treatment at the hospital.

What Can I Do to Keep My Family Safe?

The following steps should be taken right away to help protect you and your child.

Protecting your family from lead in the water:

- Get your water tested for lead. It's free. Call (810) 787-6537 to learn more.
- Use a water filter in your home. Call 2-1-1 for information on free NSF Certified water filters.
- Run only cold water through the filter.
- If you do not have a water filter, use bottled water for drinking and mixing formula.
- Use filtered or bottled water for drinking (including making coffee, drink mixes, juice, baby formula), and cooking (even if you boil the water, the lead will stay in the water and food).
- You can use unfiltered tap water for washing your hands and washing dishes.
- If you have to use unfiltered water for drinking or cooking, run the tap for five minutes before using the water.

Safe cleaning:

Safe cleaning is important. Keeping your home clean and safe from lead hazards will help to protect your family.

- Buildings built before 1978 could have lead paint in them. Use wet paper towels to clean up paint chips and dust in these older buildings. Be sure to clean around windows, play areas, and floors.
- Wash hands and toys often with soap and water.
- You can use unfiltered tap water to wipe down countertops, mop floors, and wash clothes.

Good nutrition:

Some foods will help keep lead from being stored in a child's body. These are foods with a lot of calcium, iron and vitamin C. These foods include:

Calcium Rich Foods	Iron Rich Foods	Foods with Vitamin C
➤ Milk	➤ Beans	➤ Oranges
➤ Cheese	➤ Lean meats like fish and chicken	➤ Orange juice
➤ Yogurt	➤ Whole grain cereals	➤ Grapefruits
➤ Tofu	➤ Peanut butter	➤ Tomatoes
➤ Spinach		➤ Green peppers

Always wash your fruits with filtered water. If you are concerned about your child's diet, talk with your doctor who may also recommend a daily multivitamin.

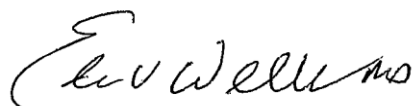
WIC and SNAP provide assistance to parents and children who need fresh and healthy foods. Contact the **Genesee County WIC office at (810) 237-4537** to learn more. SNAP also offers a Double Bucks program to purchase even more healthy food for no additional costs.

Where can I get more information on lead?

- 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
- 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,



Eden V. Wells, MD, MPH, FACPM
Chief Medical Executive
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



Gary K. Johnson, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Genesee County Health Department