

# What Your Child's Venous Blood Lead Level Means

## What is Lead?

Lead is a toxic metal that can harm a child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Most lead poisoning occurs when children lick, swallow, or breathe in dust from old lead paint.

## Why Does My Child Need to Be Tested for Lead?

A blood lead level tells you how much lead is in your child's blood. The lower the level, the better. A venous blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ) or higher is considered elevated and requires action.

## What Can I Do to Protect My Child From Lead?

Follow the steps in the table below if your child's lead test was a venous test, which is when blood is taken from a vein. Continue to have your child tested until lead levels return to normal. For tips on how to protect your child from lead, see the next page.

### YOUR CHILD'S VENOUS TEST RESULT

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_ had a venous blood lead level of \_\_\_\_\_ micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ) on \_\_\_\_\_.

Test Result in $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	Next Steps
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>There is very little lead in your child's blood.</b></li><li>• Your child may need another test in a year. Ask your child's doctor when another test is needed.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> 5-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Your child's lead level is higher than normal. Take action to reduce child's exposure.</b></li><li>• Talk with your doctor and local public health department to find out how your child might have come into contact with lead, and ways to protect your child.</li><li>• Look through your home to find possible lead sources.</li><li>• Your child should be tested again in 1 to 3 months.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> 10-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Your child's lead level is high. A result of 10 or higher requires action.</b></li><li>• Talk with your doctor and local public health department to find out how your child might have come into contact with lead, and ways to protect your child.</li><li>• Look through your home to find possible lead sources.</li><li>• Your child should be tested again in 1 to 3 months.</li></ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> 15-44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Your child's lead level is very high. You and your doctor should act quickly.</b></li><li>• Talk with your doctor or nurse about your child's diet, growth and development, and possible sources of lead exposure.</li><li>• Look through your home to find possible lead sources.</li><li>• If the lead level is 15 to 19, your child should be tested again in 1 to 3 months.</li><li>• If the lead level is 20 to 44, your child should be tested again in 2 weeks to 1 month.</li></ul>
<b>45 and higher</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Your child needs medical treatment right away.</b></li><li>• Your doctor or health department will call you as soon as they get the test result.</li><li>• Your child might have to stay in a hospital, especially if your home has lead. Your child should not go back home until the lead sources are removed or fixed.</li><li>• Your child needs to be tested again after treatment until high lead levels go back to normal.</li></ul>

# How to Protect Your Child from Lead

## Keep Children Away from Lead Paint and Lead Dust

- Lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 is a common source of lead in children.
- When old lead paint cracks and peels, it can create dangerous lead dust that can be breathed in or swallowed.
- Keep children away from areas where there is chipping and peeling paint or bare soil. Do not allow children to eat paint chips, eat soil, or chew on painted surfaces.
- Take off shoes before entering the home to prevent bringing lead-contaminated soil into your house.

## Clean Up Dust and Wash Hands and Toys Often

- Keep your home clean and dust-free. Mop floors often and use a wet paper towel to wipe down windowsills and other surfaces regularly. Do not dry sweep.
- Wash your child's hands often, especially before eating, sleeping, and after playing outside.
- Wash toys, stuffed animals, pacifiers, and bottles with soap and water often.
- Clean carpets with a vacuum fitted with a HEPA filter. Avoid shaking out carpets and rugs.

## Renovate Safely

- Home repairs like sanding or scraping paint can make lead dust in homes built before 1978.
- Children and pregnant women should stay away from repairs that disturb old paint until area is cleaned. Use wet cleaning methods and a HEPA vacuum (not dry sweeping).
- Make sure lead-safe work practices are used. If hiring a contractor, make sure contractor is certified in lead safe work or lead removal.

## Don't Bring Lead Home from Job or Hobby

- Some jobs and hobbies can expose your family to lead. These include working in construction, plumbing, foundries, welding, ammunition production, car repair, battery and metal recycling, and making fishing weights, stained glass, pottery, and jewelry.
- If you work with lead, change work clothes and wash face, hands and uncovered skin before going home. Take work shoes off at your door. Wash work clothes separately from other family member's clothes. Use personal protective equipment at work.

## Serve Healthy Foods

- Children should eat a well-balanced diet. Give your child regular meals and snacks and serve healthy foods:
  - Foods rich in calcium: milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu, and green, leafy vegetables
  - Foods rich in iron: beans, lean meat, fortified cereal, and peanut butter
  - Foods rich in vitamin C: oranges, strawberries, tomatoes, bell peppers, and potatoes

## Avoid Medicines, Cosmetics, and Other Products That May Contain Lead

- Avoid using folk medicines, spices, cosmetics, and other products known to contain lead, especially if your child has an elevated blood lead level:
- Some traditional medicines and home remedies from other countries that can contain lead include Daw Tway, Paylooah, Bali goli, Azarcon, Alarcon, and Greta.
- Some spices bought in or sent from other countries can contain lead, including curry powder, turmeric, masala, and chili powder.
- Cosmetic products from the Middle East and Asia that may contain lead include Kohl, Kajal, Surma, Kumkum, and Sindoor.
- Some imported glazed pottery and ceramics used for cooking or storing food may contain lead, such as ceramic cooking pots from Latin America.

## Find out more about lead.

- Talk with your child's doctor or nurse.
- Call your local health department. Visit [www.dhhs.ne.gov/lhd](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/lhd) to find your local health department.
- Visit the Nebraska DHHS lead website at [www.dhhs.ne.gov/lead](http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/lead).
- Call the Nebraska Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-888-242-1100.

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