

# What Your Child's Capillary 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 blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ) or higher is high and requires action.

## What is a Capillary Blood Lead Level Test?

A capillary blood lead test is used as a screening tool to tell if your child has been exposed to lead. A small amount of blood is taken from your child's finger. If this level is high, a venous test is needed to confirm the level because it's more accurate than a capillary test. A venous lead test is when blood is taken from a vein in the arm.

## What Can I Do To Protect My Child from Lead?

Follow the recommendations below for confirmation testing. Talk with your child's doctor about the blood lead level and how to avoid lead exposures. For tips on how to protect your child from lead, see the next page.

### YOUR CHILD'S CAPILLARY TEST RESULT

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

**Venous Test Follow-up Needed**

Because your child has a capillary blood lead level of 5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  or higher, your child needs a venous follow-up test to confirm the elevated blood lead level. The venous test should be done within:

- Within 3 months (5 - 9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ )
- Within 1 month (10 - 44  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ )
- With 24 - 48 hours (45 - 69  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ )
- IMMEDIATELY (70  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  or higher)

\*Note: If your child has already had a venous confirmation test taken, please disregard this recommendation.

# 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.

