



Blood Lead Levels in Children

Update for Families in Federally-Assisted Housing

In February 2017, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) issued new guidelines for addressing lead hazards in federally-assisted target housing. The guidelines include new, lower thresholds for when HUD and public housing authorities (PHAs) must take action if a child under age six in federally-assisted housing built before 1978 has an elevated blood lead level (EBLL).

What does it mean for a child to have an elevated blood lead level (EBLL)?

- An EBLL occurs when a child under age six is found to have five micrograms or more of lead per deciliter of blood.
- An EBLL is measured by a venous blood draw. A finger prick is not enough.
- A confirmed EBLL triggers a series of action steps to be taken by your PHA and HUD.
- You should inform the PHA of your child's EBLL to make sure they get started on testing your home.

Your PHA is responsible for ensuring that your home is free of hazards from lead-based paint!

The PHA will provide: a lead disclosure form, the "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home" pamphlet, annual inspections of your home, and EBLL response.

What to expect if your child has an EBLL: Next steps from your PHA or landlord

Once your PHA has been notified of a verified EBLL, they must take a series of steps. If you are in public housing, the PHA is responsible for all the steps. If you have a voucher, some of the steps must be done by the PHA and others by your landlord. Communicate with your PHA to verify who will be completing these steps:

- The PHA will immediately verify the EBLL report.
- The PHA will ensure a certified assessor performs an environmental investigation in your home within 15 days of the verified report.
- The PHA will notify you and other building residents of the results of the environmental investigation within 15 days of receiving the results.
- If the environmental investigation identified lead-based paint hazards, your PHA (or landlord) will make all necessary repairs within 30 days. The PHA must protect you and your family from further exposure to lead hazards in housing while the work is being done, so you may have to move out of your home temporarily.
- Once the repairs are complete, your home will be tested and certified to be lead-safe. The PHA will give you a "clearance examination report" that explains what was done and ask you to report any deteriorated paint or other problems with the work areas.

Be sure to read any reports provided, save copies for your records, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Background Info on Lead Poisoning:

Key Facts for Families

The health effects of lead

Lead is a highly toxic metal that can cause a range of health problems, especially in young children. Lead can cause behavioral problems, learning disabilities, seizures, and even death.

Some symptoms of lead poisoning may include headaches, stomachaches, nausea, tiredness, and irritability. But children who are lead poisoned may show no symptoms.

There is no known safe level of lead exposure. Even exposure to low levels of lead can severely harm children.

Lead poisoning is preventable. The key is to keep children from coming in contact with lead. If children are lead poisoned, they need assistance from a health professional.

Household sources of lead

Lead can be found in a variety of sources: paint in homes built before 1978; water pumped through lead pipes; and certain imported items including clay pots, toys, jewelry, and home remedies.

The only way to find out if lead hazards exist in your home is to test for them.

Check your family for lead

Consult your health care provider for advice on testing your children. Your pediatrician can check with a simple blood test.

Simple steps to protect your family from lead hazards

- ✓ Don't try to remove lead-based paint yourself.
- ✓ Talk to your landlord about fixing surfaces with peeling or chipping paint.
- ✓ Regularly clean floors, window sills, and other surfaces.
- ✓ Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- ✓ Make sure children eat healthy, low-fat foods high in iron, calcium, and vitamin C.
- ✓ Remove shoes or wipe soil off shoes before entering your home.



For more information

Learn how to protect children from lead poisoning at [epa.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead), [hud.gov/lead](https://www.hud.gov/lead), or 1-800-424-LEAD (5323). Hearing- or speech-challenged individuals may access the phone numbers through TTY by calling the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339.