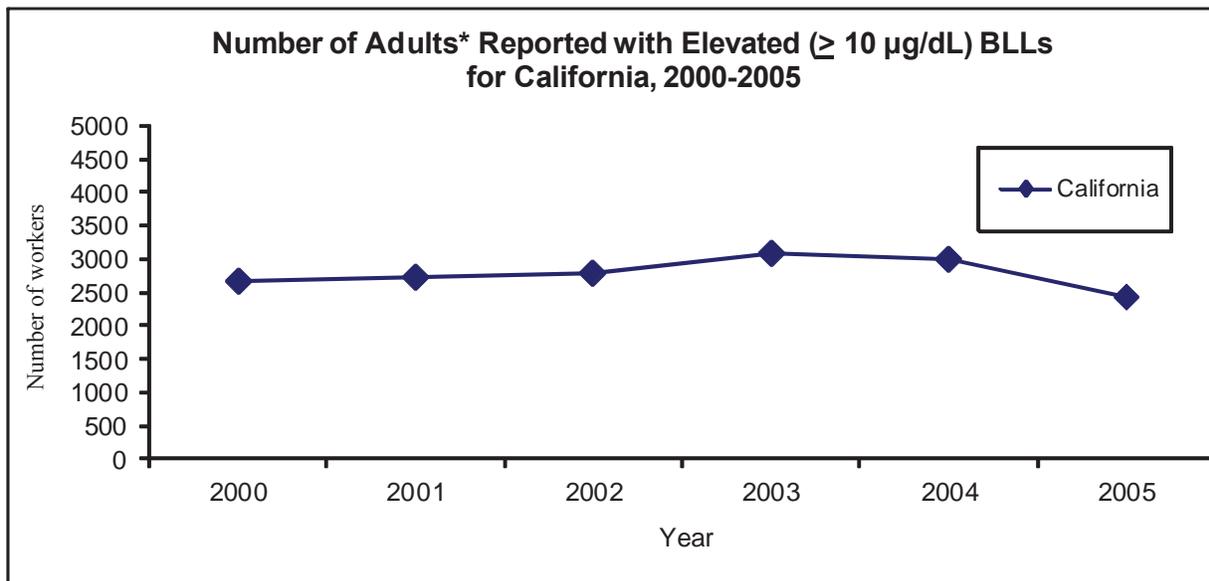


Elevated Blood Lead Levels Among Adults

Despite being a well-known and preventable illness, lead poisoning remains a significant problem for many adults in California. Most lead exposure in adults is from the workplace. Lead exposure at work occurs in a variety of industries, and overexposure to lead can cause anemia, nervous system or kidney damage, high blood pressure, decreased fertility, and miscarriage. Lead from work can also be brought home on a worker's clothing or shoes, and can cause health damage to family members.

The blood lead level (BLL) is the best biological indicator of recent lead exposure, and most states require laboratories to report BLL results. A BLL of 10 ug/dL is considered "elevated," and the Healthy People 2020 goal is to reduce the proportion of adults with BLLs above this level. Cal/OSHA requires that employers regularly monitor the BLLs of lead-exposed workers. New information about health effects at lower BLLs shows that workers are not adequately protected under the current OSHA standards, which are based on health information that is over 30 years old.

The true number of Californians with elevated BLLs is likely even greater than reported, as not all employers in lead-using workplaces provide the required BLL testing. Approximately 40 states, including California, have active programs that track adult BLLs; see www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/OLPPP.



* Because determining whether BLLs are work-related can be difficult, this Indicator reports BLLs in all adults, not just workers.

Data Sources: State of California Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OLPPP), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey

Rate and Number of Elevated Blood Lead Levels Among Adults for California and U.S., 2000-2005							
Year	California						U.S.
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005
Number of Residents with Elevated Blood Lead Levels ≥ 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	2671**	2719**	2794**	3081	2990	2431	N/A
Prevalence Rate of Elevated Blood Lead Levels ≥ 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ Among Adults per 100,000 employed	16.4**	16.5**	17.2**	18.9	18.2	14.5	N/A
Number of Residents with Elevated Blood Lead Levels ≥ 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	924	745	664	534	458	433	8,902
Prevalence Rate of Elevated Blood Lead Levels ≥ 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ Among Adults per 100,000 employed	5.7	4.5	4.1	3.3	2.8	2.6	4.2

**At this time, reporting of BLLs less than 25 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ was voluntary, so these numbers are likely an underestimate.

Data Sources: State of California Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OLPPP), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey

Rate and Number of Elevated Blood Lead Levels Among Adults for California and U.S., 2000-2005							
Year	California						U.S.
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2005
Number of Residents with Elevated Blood Lead Levels $\geq 40 \mu\text{g/dL}$	125	103	90	67	43	62	1,498
Prevalence Rate of Elevated Blood Lead Levels $\geq 40 \mu\text{g/dL}$ Among Adults per 100,000 employed	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.7

Data Sources: State of California Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OLPPP), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey