

Standard of Care Guidelines on Childhood Lead Poisoning for California Health Care Providers



No Level of Lead in the Body is Known to Be Safe

“Evidence continues to accrue that commonly encountered blood lead concentrations, even those less than 10 mcg/dL, may impair cognition, and there is no threshold yet identified for this effect. Most US children are at sufficient risk that they should have their blood lead concentration measured at least once.”

Lead Exposure in Children: Prevention, Detection, and Management • American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Committee on Environmental Health • Pediatrics 2005; 116: 1036-1046

“Blood lead concentrations, even those below 10 mcg per deciliter, are inversely associated with children’s IQ scores at three and five years of age, and associated declines in IQ are greater at these concentrations than at higher concentrations. These findings suggest that more U.S. children may be adversely affected by environmental lead than previously estimated.”

Intellectual Impairment in Children with Blood Lead Concentrations below 10 mcg per Deciliter • Richard L. Canfield, Charles R. Henderson Jr., Deborah A. Cory-Slechta, Christopher Cox, Todd A. Jusko, and Bruce P. Lanphear • The New England Journal Of Medicine 2003; 348: 1517 – 1526

“Evidence from this cohort indicates that children’s intellectual functioning at 6 years of age is impaired by blood lead concentrations well below 10 mcg/dL, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention definition of an elevated blood lead level.”

Blood Lead Concentrations < 10 mcg/dL and Child Intelligence at 6 Years of Age • Todd A. Jusko, Charles R. Henderson Jr., Bruce P. Lanphear, Deborah A. Cory-Slechta, Patrick J. Parsons, and Richard L. Canfield • Environmental Health Perspective 2008; 116: 243 - 248

Regulations for California Providers Caring for Children 6 Months to 6 Years of Age

California state regulations impose specific responsibilities on doctors, nurse practitioners and physician's assistants doing periodic health care assessments on children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years. This is a brief summary of health care provider's responsibilities. **These regulations apply to all physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants**, not just Medi-Cal or Child Health and Disability Prevention (CHDP) providers.

ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE	At each periodic assessment from 6 months to 6 years
SCREEN (blood lead test)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in publicly supported programs* at both 12 months and 24 months • Children age 24 months to 6 years in publicly supported programs* who were not tested appropriately <p>* Examples of publicly supported programs include Medi-Cal, CHDP, Health Families, and WIC.</p>
ASSESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If child is not in publicly supported program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ask: "Does your child live in, or spend a lot of time in, a place built before 1978 that has peeling or chipped paint or that has been recently remodeled?" Blood lead test if the answer to the question is "yes" or "don't know." • Change in circumstances has put child at risk of lead exposure • <i>Other indications for a blood lead test:</i>¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>Parental request</i> – <i>Suspected lead exposure (see possible sources of lead exposure on other side)</i> – <i>History of living in or visiting country with high levels of environmental lead</i>

¹ Items in italics are not in regulations but also should be considered.

Potential Sources of Lead: Educating Families to Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure



Potential Sources of Lead

Guidance for Families

Old paint inside or outside the home Most lead paint is in homes built before 1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Move cribs, high chairs, and playpens away from cracked or peeling paint.• Do not allow child to chew on windowsills or other painted surfaces.• Call local lead poisoning prevention program about testing paint for lead.
Dust on windowsills, floors, and toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wet mop floors and wet wipe windowsills and other surfaces.• Wash toys often.• Wash children's hands before eating and sleeping.
Dirt outside the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cover bare dirt with stones, grass, plants, or gravel.• Wipe shoes or take them off BEFORE going in the house.
Take home exposure from clothing/hair if family member works around lead	Shower and change clothes BEFORE coming home from work and BEFORE holding child.
Pottery and dishes made outside of the U.S., in places such as Mexico or China	Call local lead poisoning prevention program for more information about testing pottery and dishes for lead.
Traditional remedies <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Azarcon — orange or yellow powder• Greta — orange or yellow powder• Paylooah — red powder• Some Ayurvedic remedies• Some Chinese patent medicines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not let anyone give "natural" or traditional remedies to child.• Have family talk to you, the health care provider, about remedies.
Some cosmetics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surma• Kohl• Khali• Sindoor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not use these products on children.• Call local lead poisoning prevention program about testing cosmetics for lead.
Costume jewelry, amulets	Do not allow young children to play with or touch these items.
Some foods and spices <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some candies (especially imported)• Chapulines (grasshopper snacks)• Some imported turmeric and chili powder	Choose healthy snacks for child, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and dairy products.
Other items, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fishing sinkers• Bullets• Stained glass-making kits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep these items away from child.• Wash hands well after touching these items.