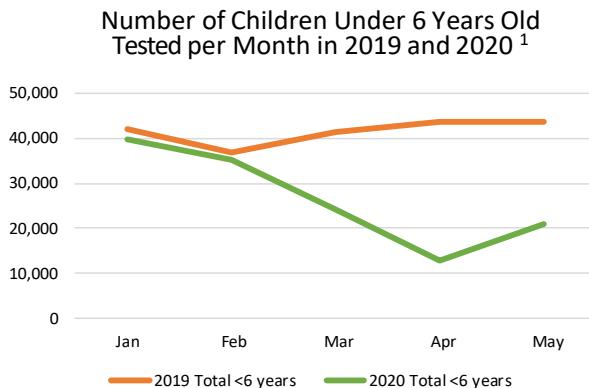


# CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION BRANCH

## Information for Medical Providers: Assessing and Testing for Lead During COVID-19

Mandated blood lead testing has declined during COVID-19, putting children at risk



### Background

- Childhood lead poisoning is one of the most common and preventable environmental health issues in California.
- Blood lead testing at-risk children is the best way to identify children with elevated levels of lead.
- Children are more susceptible than adults due to:
  - Increased hand-to-mouth behavior.
  - Five times greater lead absorption via the gastrointestinal tract.
  - Rapid growth and development.
  - Blood brain barrier still developing.

### Lead Affects Multiple Systems

- Hematologic:** Anemia
- Neurologic:** Intelligence Quotient, Memory, Cognition, Behavior, Learning, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Cardiovascular:** Hypertension, Cardiovascular Mortality
- Renal:** Lead Related Nephritis, Elevated Uric Acid
- Reproductive:** Fertility, Preeclampsia, Intrauterine Growth Restriction, Preterm Birth, Spontaneous Abortion

### Who is Required to be Blood Lead Tested?

- Children enrolled in publicly funded programs for low income children, such as Medi-Cal, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP).
- Children living in, or spending a lot of time in, buildings with deteriorated paint or recent renovation or remodeling, either built before 1978 or when the age of the buildings is unknown.

### Other Indications for Blood Lead Testing

- Sibling, playmate or other close contact with increased blood lead level (BLL)
- History of living in or visiting a country with high environmental lead
- Change in circumstances has put child at risk for lead exposure
- Children with pica
- Parental request
- Mother with elevated BLL while pregnant or breastfeeding
- Suspected lead exposure (**see other side for possible sources of lead exposure**)

### Test At-Risk Children At 12 and 24 Months

If there is lead in their environment, crawling, teething, and hand-to-mouth behavior put them at increased risk.

#### Age 12 months:

- Testing allows early identification of, and intervention for, lead-exposed children.
- If 12-month BLL test is missed, catch-up testing is required up to age 24 months.

#### Age 24 months:

- BLLs can be increased, even if not increased at age 12 months.
- If 24-month BLL test is missed, catch-up testing is required up to age 72 months.

**Children with behavioral risk factors may need ongoing testing after age 24 months** (e.g., autism, autism spectrum disorder, Down's syndrome, developmental delay, and some chronic medical conditions, such as sickle cell disease).

### Implement Lead Test Reminder and Tracking System

- Send patient reminders: phone, mail, email, text.
- Set automatic lead test reminder in electronic records

For free provider guidelines and patient education materials, visit [www.cdph.gov/programs/clppb](http://www.cdph.gov/programs/clppb) and click on "Health Care Providers."

<sup>1</sup> CLPPB RASSCLE surveillance data; 7/29/2020. Each child is counted only once during a month and deduplicated using first name, last name, date of birth, and ZIP code.

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## 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"> <li>▶ Move cribs, high chairs, and playpens away from cracked or peeling paint.</li> <li>▶ Do not allow children to chew on windowsills or other painted surfaces.</li> <li>▶ <a href="#">Call local lead poisoning prevention program</a> about testing paint for lead.</li> </ul>
Dust on windowsills, floors, and toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Wet mop floors and wet wipe windowsills and other surfaces.</li> <li>▶ Wash toys often.</li> <li>▶ Wash children's hands before eating and sleeping.</li> </ul>
Dirt outside the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Cover bare dirt with stones, grass, plants, or gravel.</li> <li>▶ Wipe shoes or take them off BEFORE going in the house.</li> </ul>
<u>Drinking Water</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ For cooking or drinking, let water run until cold before using.</li> <li>▶ Do not use a water crock unless it has been tested and found to be lead free.</li> </ul>
Take-home exposure from shoes/clothing/hair if family member works around lead or performs auto repair at home	<p>Shower and change clothes BEFORE coming home from work, if possible, and BEFORE holding children. Remove work clothes and shoes and store them in a plastic bag. Wash work clothes separately from other clothes.</p>
Some dishes or pots that are worn or antique, from a discount or flea market, made of crystal, handmade, or made outside the USA	<p>Call local lead poisoning prevention program for more information about testing dishes and pots for lead.</p>
<b>Traditional remedies, such as:</b>	<p>Do not let anyone give "natural" or traditional remedies to your child without talking to your health care provider first.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Azarcon and Greta – orange or yellow powder</li> <li>▶ Paylooh – red powder</li> <li>▶ Some Ayurvedic remedies</li> <li>▶ Some traditional Chinese remedies</li> </ul>	
Some traditional cosmetics and other substances applied to the skin, such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Do not use these products on children.</li> <li>▶ Call local lead poisoning prevention program about testing traditional cosmetics, ritual powders, and other substances applied to the skin.</li> </ul>
Altars for religious ritual containing:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Place altars with these types of items in areas not accessible to children.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ritual powders</li> <li>▶ Brass and some other metal, ceramic, or painted items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Don't let children handle or mouth these items.</li> <li>▶ Use separate cleaning supplies to clean these items.</li> </ul>
Some costume jewelry, amulets, and keys	<p>Do not allow young children to play with, mouth or touch these items.</p>
<b>Some foods and spices, such as:</b>	<p>Be aware of foods and spices that might contain lead.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Some candies (especially imported)</li> <li>▶ Chapulines (grasshopper snacks)</li> <li>▶ Some imported spices, such as turmeric, chili powder, Khmeli Suneli</li> <li>▶ Game meat containing lead shot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Offer children meals and snacks including a variety of vegetables, fruit, legumes, seeds, nuts, whole grains, unprocessed meats, and dairy products or dairy substitutes without added sugar.</li> </ul>
<b>Other items, such as:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Keep these items away from children.</li> <li>▶ Wash hands well after touching these items.</li> <li>▶ Do not heat, melt, cast or file any metal items at home.</li> </ul>
Spends time at firing ranges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Children who spend time at firing ranges should be tested for lead.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Use lead free ammunition.</li> <li>▶ Do not eat or drink at a firing range.</li> <li>▶ When finished shooting, immediately wash your hands and face with soap and water.</li> <li>▶ Change clothes and shoes before going home and wash those clothes separately.</li> </ul>
Retained bullets and shrapnel	<p>Consult with your healthcare provider about ongoing testing and monitoring.</p>
<b>Lives or spends time near:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Tell your healthcare provider if your children live or spend time near these types of roadways or facilities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Major roadways or freeways</li> <li>▶ A former or current lead or steel smelter</li> <li>▶ A foundry or industrial facility that historically emitted or currently emits lead</li> <li>▶ A general aviation airport used by small aircraft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Do not let children play or spend time near these types of roadways or facilities.</li> </ul>