



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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East Helena Lead Education and Abatement Program

Blood Lead Screenings

The East Helena Lead Education and Abatement Program offers free blood lead screenings to all area residents and their children. The program emphasizes the importance of a blood lead screening for children ages 6 months to 6 years of age and pregnant women.

Pregnant Women

Prenatal lead exposure has known adverse effects on maternal health and infant outcomes across a wide range of maternal blood lead levels. Adverse effects of lead exposure are being identified at lower levels of exposure than previously recognized in both children and adults. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued the first guidelines regarding the screening and management of pregnant and lactating women who have been exposed to lead. Lead readily crosses the placenta by passive diffusion and has been detected in the fetal brain as early as the end of the first trimester. Elevated lead levels in pregnancy have been associated with several adverse outcomes including:

- ✓ gestational hypertension
- ✓ spontaneous abortion
- ✓ low birth weight and
- ✓ impaired neurodevelopment.

Risk assessment of lead exposure should take place at the earliest contact with pregnant or lactating women. Nutrition should be discussed and sources of lead exposure should be identified and removed from living and working environments if a pregnant woman is tested and has a blood lead level of 5 micrograms/dL or higher.

Children

Children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years of age are at the highest risk because small children put everything in their mouths and they absorb more lead as their bodies are still developing.

How can I protect myself and my child from lead poisoning?

- Encourage your children to play on grass or other covered areas; teach them to avoid dusty streets and bare soil areas.
- Keep paint in good condition
- Clean up lead chips and lead dust with a wet mop or wet cloth
- Clean your floors and inside windowsills with a HEPA vacuum (call the LEAP to find out more on our free HEPA vacuum rental program.
- Be sure your child eats a well balanced diet.
- Always have your children wash their hands before eating and after playing outside
- Wash your children's toys often
- Keep children away from hobby areas where lead is used
- Get your children tested—Even children who appear healthy may have high levels of lead.

Call Debb or Jan at the LEAP office (457-8583) and find out how you can have you or your children tested.

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