



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Contact: Ryan Scarpino
Public Health Information Officer
412-578-8312 (office)
412-339-7995 (cell)
Ryan.Scarpino@AlleghenyCounty.us

Health Department to Expand Elevated Blood Lead Level Home Investigations

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) announced that starting on Monday, June 18, 2018, in-home lead investigations will be offered to all families with a child or children under 6 years of age that have a confirmed venous blood lead test ≥ 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ (greater than or equal to 5 micrograms per deciliter). There is no income limit.

“I am excited to report the expansion of our abilities to meet the needs of children with blood lead levels at or above 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$,” said ACHD Director, Dr. Karen Hacker. “We understand how concerning this can be for families, and we want to respond appropriately. This was also an important recommendation that was made in the recent Allegheny County Lead Task Force Report. This expansion of services is made possible by the addition of two new lead sanitarians, who recently joined the Health Department.”

On a case-by-case basis, ACHD will also offer these services to all families with a child or children under 6 years of age that had a confirmed ≥ 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ venous blood test, with a specimen collection date that fell within three months of June 18. These families should contact the Housing and Community Environment program (412-350-4046). Proof of a recent venous blood test with a result of ≥ 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ will need to be provided.

In-home lead investigations include: 1) A visual inspection; 2) Testing of accessible surfaces in the home with the X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) Analyzer, which identifies if there is lead in the covering on surfaces (paint, varnish, stain, etc.); 3) Dust, soil, and water sampling; 4) A survey to help identify potential sources and an education session with the parent/guardian; 5) A risk assessment report; 6) Referrals to other services that the family may be eligible for.

In the cases of owner-occupied housing, the report is a recommendation. In the case of tenant-occupied housing, the Health Department will require the landlord to make necessary repairs to make the home lead-safe, and would pursue enforcement in the case of non-compliance.

In 2018, universal lead screening, Article XXIII, went into effect in Allegheny County. It requires that all children in the county, unless otherwise exempted, to have their blood lead levels tested between 9-12 months and at 24 months. This effort is in recognition that there is no safe lead level in children. While it is important to screen children for potential exposure from any of the multiple sources, including paint, dust, soil, water or other alternative sources, primary prevention is critical. There are many steps which parents and caretakers can take to prevent lead exposure before it occurs.

For more information about ACHD’s approach to preventing lead exposure, visit:

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Programs/Special-Initiatives/Lead/Approach-to-Lead.aspx>.

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Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, Director
Allegheny County Health Department – Public Information Office
542 Fourth Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-687-ACHD (2243) | Fax: 412-578-8325 | www.achd.net

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