

COUNTY OF



ALLEGHENY

April 30, 2018

Dear School Nurse:

On January 1, 2018, Allegheny County passed new regulations requiring lead testing for all children in the county. **Children entering Kindergarten this fall will need to show that they have had two tests to measure his or her blood lead level.** Parents may submit exemptions in the same way they do for vaccines. Children are not to be kept from entering school if they haven't been tested or can't provide testing documentation.

Here is what you need to know to put this requirement into practice:

**1. Before the 2018 school year begins...**

Communicate with parents of incoming kindergartners about the new lead testing requirements. I am including a sample letter to parents describing when and where they can have their child's blood lead levels tested.

I am also including a sample blood lead level testing form that can be filled out by parents and signed by the child's doctor, or, if you prefer, you can add spaces for blood lead testing information to your existing immunization form.

**2. What information should school nurses collect about lead for entering kindergartners?**

Any form of written documentation from the child's health care provider confirming when blood lead tests were performed is acceptable.

You will be asked to report the total number of children who were tested at 9-12 months, 24 months, or had a "catch up" test prior to entering kindergarten.

**3. If you learn that a child has had an elevated blood lead level...**

School nurses are not required or expected to report blood lead levels to ACHD. All blood lead test results are immediately reported to PA-NEDSS, a statewide disease registry monitored by ACHD. If a child's blood lead level is higher than 5µg/dL, ACHD staff will contact the family directly to discuss the test results and provide information about resources available to reduce exposure to lead.

Parents should speak with the child's pediatrician or family care provider if they have any concerns about treating elevated blood lead levels. Parents can also visit [www.achd.net/lead](http://www.achd.net/lead) for more information about resources to reduce lead exposure at home.



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**4. If a child comes to kindergarten without having had a blood lead test...**

A child will not be excluded from school if they have not had blood lead tests at 9-12 months and at 24 months. However, parents should have a “catch up” test as soon as possible.

Most pediatricians and family care physicians can test blood lead levels. If a child is uninsured or if insurance won't cover lead testing, there are Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) in Allegheny County that can provide the test for free or at low cost. A map of FQHCs that offer onsite blood lead testing is included in this packet.

In addition, ACHD is offering blood lead level testing for uninsured and underinsured children in Allegheny County at ACHD's Immunization Clinic on Tuesday (9 a.m.-12 p.m.) and on Thursday (12-4 p.m.) of each week. The clinic is located on the fourth floor of the Hartley Rose Building (425 First Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15219).

**5. Reporting to ACHD**

School nurses will report the number of children who had blood lead level tests at 9-12 months, 24 months, or had a “catch up” test prior to entering kindergarten at the same time and on the same online form as vaccinations. An example of the reporting form is below:

<b>12. Kindergarten - Blood Lead Testing Information</b> 
Number of students with blood lead test at approximately 9-12 months old <input type="text"/>
Number of students with blood lead test at approximately 24 months old <input type="text"/>
Number of students with “catch up” blood lead test prior to kindergarten <input type="text"/>
Number of students with exemptions to blood lead test <input type="text"/>

We are only collecting this information from schools once per year (on December 15) in the same report as vaccination information; if you receive proof of testing after this date, don't worry. As described above, ACHD monitors blood lead test results and will contact the family directly to offer services as needed.

Our goal is to equip school nurses with useful information to support students' families as we address this important public health issue. Thank you for helping us implement universal lead screening in Allegheny County. Please contact my office with any additional ideas or questions. To request additional brochures, or for more resources, please visit [www.achd.net/lead](http://www.achd.net/lead).

Thank you,



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