



**FAMILY AND
CONSUMER SCIENCES**

Quarterly Media Packet

News for use in newspaper columns, media/news releases and news talking points.

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Lead Poisoning Prevention

Lead is a metal that our bodies cannot use. Too much lead can be dangerous because it stops good minerals such as iron and calcium from being absorbed into the body. In 2003, 12 percent of Michigan children were tested for elevated blood lead levels, and 3.2 percent of those children tested were shown to have elevated blood lead levels. Lead poisoning can be dangerous to young children that are still developing. Lead poisoning can cause nervous system and kidney damage, speech, language and behavioral problems, poor muscle coordination, hearing damage and in severe cases, death. The only way to know if your child has lead poisoning is to have your child tested at your local health department or health care provider. Answer these questions below to find out if your child could be at risk for lead poisoning.

- ✓ **Was your home or daycare built before 1950?** Homes that are older are more likely to have been painted with lead-based paint.
- ✓ **Does your home or daycare have peeling or chipping paint?** Paint chips could contain lead and could be eaten by children.
- ✓ **Does your child live in or visit a home that was built before 1978, but has been remodeled within the last year?** Lead paint was not used after 1978, but homes that have been remodeled may have exposed old lead paint.

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Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) program staff at MSU Extension can answer questions or help you learn more about money management, parent, food, nutrition and health issues. MSU Extension educators integrate university and community resources to provide tools that help families succeed. For more information on FCS programs in Michigan, call your county MSU Extension office. Check the government pages of your phone book for contact information.

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- ✓ **Has a brother, sister or playmate tested high for blood lead levels?** The lead source could be coming from a home, school or daycare facility, and your child should be tested.
- ✓ **Do you live with an adult whose job or hobbies involve lead?** Some include construction, bridge-building, plumbing, car repair, furniture refinishing, painting (artists' paints), hunting or shooting (ammunition), creating stained-glass window treatments and fishing (lead sinkers).
- ✓ **Does your family use any home remedies that may contain lead?** Some include lozeena, azarcon, greta, pay-loo-ah and kohl eye-makeup.

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you should have your child tested for elevated blood lead levels. These tests are available at your local health care provider or your local health department.

You can help protect your children from high lead levels. Good nutrition can help lessen the effects of lead poisoning. Children that are fed often and have full stomachs tend to absorb less lead than those that don't. Be sure that your child eats a healthy, balanced diet full of calcium, iron and vitamin C. For a full list of lead-fighting foods, visit www.fcs.msue.msu.edu/homesafekids. You can also protect your children by washing their hands, toys, clothes and blankets often. Let your tap water run for one minute before using for cooking or drinking. When cooking, use cold water for boiling and for mixing formula. Be sure to protect your child from the effects of lead poisoning. Give your child a healthy, balanced diet and be sure to check your home for peeling paint.

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