

Subject: Lead Inspection in Schools

Dear Families,

In New York City public schools, it is our priority to keep kids healthy and safe. To protect children under six years of age from exposure to lead, the Division of School Facilities regularly looks for peeling paint in classrooms. That's because peeling lead-based paint (which can be present in older school buildings) can present a risk of lead exposure, especially for children under age six. We are sparing no effort to ensure that wherever there may be potential exposure, it is immediately remediated.

The Division of School Facilities recently conducted inspections in all school buildings serving children under age 6 to identify peeling or damaged paint. Any identified peeling or damaged paint is in the process of being repaired before the first day of school through a rigorous remediation process. You can see results of the inspection online at www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/lead-based-paint/.

Children under 3 years old are the most susceptible and vulnerable to the health effects of lead, and children under age 6 are at higher risk than older children. Discuss your child's health history with their doctor to determine if blood lead testing is appropriate. To secure free testing or to find a doctor, call 311. If you have any questions, please visit our website at www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/lead-based-paint/.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Operating Officer

Additional Information on Lead Exposure-

www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/lead-based-paint

What are the health effects of lead?

Lead is a metal that can harm children and adults when it gets into their bodies. Lead is a known neurotoxin, particularly harmful to the developing brain and nervous system of children under 6 years old. Lead can harm a young child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. Lead exposure during pregnancy may contribute to low birth weight and developmental delays in infants. There are many sources of lead exposure in the environment, and it is important to reduce all lead exposures as much as possible. Water testing helps identify and correct possible sources of lead that contribute to exposure from drinking water.

What are the other sources of lead exposure?

Lead is a metal that has been used for centuries for many purposes, resulting in widespread distribution in the environment. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint in older housing, and lead that built up over decades in soil and dust due to historical use of lead in gasoline, paint, and manufacturing. Lead can also be found in a number of consumer products, including certain types of pottery, pewter, brass fixtures, foods, plumbing materials, and cosmetics. Lead seldom occurs naturally in water supplies but drinking water could become a possible source of lead exposure if the building's plumbing contains lead. The primary source of lead exposure for most children with elevated blood-lead levels is lead-based paint.

Who is at risk for lead poisoning?

Children under 3 years of age are the most susceptible and vulnerable to the health effects of lead. Lead also poses a risk to the developing fetus. Exposure to lead may interfere with a child's growth and development.

What do we know about rates of lead poisoning in NYC children?

Rates of lead poisoning among NYC children have been falling. In 2015, 5,371 New York City children younger than 6 years of age were identified with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater. This represents an 18% decline from 2014 when there were 6,550 children with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, and an 86% decline since 2005 when there were 37,344 children with blood lead levels of 5mcg/dL or greater.

Additional Resources

For more information regarding the testing program or sampling results go to:
www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/reports/lead-based-paint

For information about lead go to:
<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/lead-poisoning-prevention.page>

For information about NYS Department of Health Lead Poisoning Prevention, go to: <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

For more information on blood lead testing and ways to reduce your child's risk of exposure to lead, see "What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means":
<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2526/> (available in ten languages).