



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(9/27/24) Southern 7 Encourages Blood Lead Screening for Children (Approximately 100,000 Illinois children age 6 years and younger have blood lead levels that are too high)

The buildup of lead in the body is known as Lead Poisoning. Approximately 100,000 Illinois children age 6 years and younger have blood lead levels that are too high. October 20 - 26 was National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. Southern 7 Health Department encourages families to talk to their child's healthcare provider about testing for blood lead during wellness visits and get screening if needed.

"While lead poisoning is concerning, it is treatable," said Shawna Rhine, Community Outreach Coordinator. "Even the smallest amount of lead can harm a child's brain, kidneys, and stomach, as well as slow development and cause learning and behavior problems. All children at risk of lead poisoning, especially those who live in or regularly visit a home that has paint original to 1978 or prior, should be tested."

Women planning to have a baby should also be tested for lead. Lead in a mother's body can cause a baby to be born too small and too early.

The best way to prevent lead poisoning is to get the lead out. Steps to take include:

- Wash your child's hands before they eat.
- Foods high in Vitamin C, iron, and calcium, such as meat eggs, raisins, greens, mild, cheese, fruits and potatoes, help get the lead out of a child's system.
- Wash your child's toys often and throw away lead-painted toys.
- Do not store food in open cans or pottery.
- If you work with lead, shower and change clothes before coming home. Wash your work clothes separately.
- Run cold water for a few minutes before using it for cooking and drinking. Do not use water from the hot water tap for cooking, drinking or making formula.
- Wear protective clothing, including gloves and a facemask to clean up chipping and peeling paint inside and outside your home. Wash all clothing separately.

Testing for blood lead is available through Southern 7 Health Department on the IDPH Wellness on Wheels (WOW) Van and all public health clinics. To schedule a blood lead screening for your child, or for more information about testing, call 618-634-2297 or download the Southern 7 App for details.

For more information on getting the lead out of your home safely call the Illinois Department of Public Health's Illinois Lead Program at 866-909-3572.

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