

NEWS RELEASE

February 27, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Test for Lead at One

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) encourages parents to get their child tested for lead exposure when they are one year old. Childhood exposure to lead can have serious health effects like problems with hearing, speech, or learning. It can also slow down a child's growth and development, and cause damage to the brain.

“More than half of the homes in southwest Nebraska were built in 1978 or earlier, and children are still being exposed to lead,” states Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “Getting kids tested for lead is very important since the symptoms are not obvious at first.”

Parents and healthcare providers play a key role in preventing lead poisoning by identifying children at risk for exposure and testing their blood lead levels. Children between the ages of one and five years old should have a blood lead test. If their lead level is higher than recommended, a quick survey of your home can help identify possible sources of lead exposure.

Look for Lead

- Was the home built before 1978? Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. Lead from paint, paint chips, and dust can be a serious health hazard for children and pregnant people.
- Has the water been tested for lead? The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures.
- Are renovations, repairs, or repainting stirring up lead dust? Lead dust can be breathed in or picked up from food, floors, windowsills, and other places.
- Do children wash their hands after playing outside? Soil can contain lead, and small children may need help washing their hands thoroughly.
- Is lead brought into the home on work clothes, shoes, or hair? Some jobs involve working with lead such as galvanizers, painters, auto repair workers, and plumbers.

There are tests available for water, paint, and other sources to find out if your home contains lead. The Environmental Protection Agency website epa.gov has resources to find lead testing or a certified risk assessor.

For more information call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223 or the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323). Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

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