What Your Child's Blood Lead Test Means

The blood lead test tells you how much lead is in your child's blood. Lead can harm a child's growth, behavior, and ability to learn. The lower the test result, the better.

Most lead poisoning occurs when children lick, swallow, or breathe in dust from old lead paint. Most homes built before 1978 have old lead paint, often under newer paint. If paint peels, cracks, or is worn down, the chips and dust from the old lead paint can spread onto floors, windowsills and all around your home. Lead paint dust can then get onto children's hands and toys, and into their mouths.

Most children have had some contact with lead in old paint, soil, plumbing, or another source. This is why New York State requires doctors to test all children with a blood lead test at age **1 year** and *again* at age **2 years**. For children up to age six years, your doctor or nurse should ask you at every well child visit about ways your child may have had contact with lead. Children who have had contact with lead should be tested.

A high test result using blood from a fingertip should be checked again with a second test using blood taken from a vein (often in the arm). If the second result is still high, you should follow the steps below.

Test Result in micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL)	Next Steps
0-4	• **There is very little lead in your child's blood.** • The average lead test result for young children is about 2 mcg/dL.
5-9	• **Your child has a little more lead than most children.** • Talk with your doctor and local health department to find out how your child might have come into contact with lead, and ways to protect your child. • Your doctor might want to test your child again in 3 to 6 months.
10-14	• **Your child's lead level is high. A result of 10 or higher requires action.** • Your doctor and local health department will talk with you to help you find sources of lead, and ways you can protect your child. • Your child should be tested again in 1 to 3 months.
15-44	• **Your child's lead level is quite high. You and your doctor should act quickly.** • Talk with your doctor or nurse about your child's diet, growth and development, and possible sources of lead. • Talk with your local health department about how to protect your child. They may visit your home to help you find sources of lead. • If the lead level is 15 to 24, your child should be tested again in 1 to 3 months. • If the lead level is 25 to 44, your child should be tested again in 2 weeks to 1 month.
45 or higher	• **Your child needs medical treatment right away.** • Your doctor or health department will call you as soon as they get the test result. • Your child might have to stay in a hospital, especially if your home has lead. • Your local health department will visit your home to help you find sources of lead. • Your child should not go back home until the lead sources are removed or fixed. • Your child needs to be tested again after treatment.

Child's Name: _____ Test Result: _____ mcg/dL Date: _____

If the test result is not written here, ask your doctor or nurse for it, write it down, and save for your records.

For all test results, follow the advice on the other side to keep your child's lead level from rising.

Over →

How to Protect Your Child From Lead Poisoning

Fix peeling lead paint and make home repairs safely.

- Keep children away from peeling or chipped paint.
- Before making repairs in a home built before 1978, call your local health department to learn how to work safely and keep dust levels down.
- Children and pregnant women should stay away from repairs that disturb old paint, such as sanding and scraping. They should stay away until the area is cleaned using wet cleaning methods and a HEPA vacuum (not dry sweeping).

Wash dust off hands, toys, bottles, windows and floors.

- Wash your child's hands and face after play, before meals, and before bed.
- Wash toys, stuffed animals, pacifiers and bottles with soap and water often.
- Mop floors often, and use damp paper towels to clean window wells and sills.

Be careful not to bring lead home on clothes, toys, or jewelry.

- Lead is in some children's jewelry, toys, keys, and old furniture. Sign up for children's product recall alerts at www.cpsc.gov/cpsclist.aspx.
- Some jobs and hobbies can involve contact with lead. These include: painting, plumbing, construction, car repair, or working with firearms, stained glass or pottery. To lower lead dust, change work clothes before going home; take shoes off at your door; wash work or hobby clothes separately; wash face, hands and uncovered skin before going home.

Keep lead out of your food and tap water.

- Let tap water run for one minute before using it, if it hasn't been run for a few hours. Town and well water could have lead from old plumbing.
- Only use cold tap water for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Boiling your water does *not* get rid of lead.
- Use lead-free dishes. Don't serve or store food in pewter, crystal, or cracked pottery.
- Call your health department, or visit the website below, to see which dishes, spices, candy, cosmetics, and health remedies have been found to have lead.

Serve foods that have calcium, iron, and vitamin C.

These foods help keep lead from being stored in your child's body.

- Foods with **calcium**: milk, cheese, yogurt, tofu, and green, leafy vegetables.
- Foods with **iron**: beans, lean meat, fortified cereal and peanut butter.
- Foods with **vitamin C**: oranges, orange juice, grapefruit, tomatoes, green peppers.

Find out more about lead.

- **Talk with your child's doctor or nurse.**
- **Call your local health department, listed in the phone book blue pages. In New York City and Rochester, call 311.**
- **Visit the New York State Department of Health website at: www.nyhealth.gov/environmental/lead**