

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. However, no lead level has been proven safe.

Lead poisoning occurs when children lick, swallow or breathe in dust from 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. Mining has occurred in a large portion of Missouri. High levels of lead in the air, dust, and soil have been found in areas surrounding mining activity. Mining waste in these areas has been used for driveways, landfill material, and even in children's play areas. Other sources of lead include drinking water, jewelry, pottery and occupational exposures brought home. Lead paint, dust and other materials containing lead may get onto children's hands and into their mouths and swallowed or inhaled.

Many children have had some contact with lead in old paint, soil, plumbing or other sources. All children under the age of 6 should be screened for lead risk factors at each well-child check. If a child is at risk for lead poisoning, he or she should be tested. All children under the age of 4 should be provided lead education and offered a test yearly. For children up to age six, 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. Additionally, Federal requirements are to blood lead test ALL children receiving Medicaid benefits at ages 12 and 24 months, at a minimum.

A high test result using blood from a fingertip or the foot 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, follow the steps below.

Test Result (mcg/dL)	Next Steps
0-3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is very little lead in your child's blood.• Conduct future lead screenings at your provider's discretion.
3.5-9.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is above the reference value set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Talk with your doctor and local health department to find out how your child might have come into contact with lead and decrease the exposure to your child.• Your doctor should test your child again within 3 months.
10-14.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child's lead level is high.• Your doctor and local health department will talk with you to help you find sources of lead and decrease the exposure to your child.• Your child should be tested again within 1 to 3 months.
15-44.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child's lead level is quite high.• 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 from lead.• A highly trained individual from either your local health department or the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) 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 within 1 to 3 months.• If the lead level is 25 to 44, your child should be tested again within 1 month.
45-69.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child needs medication to help decrease the lead level in the blood.• A highly trained individual from either your local health department or DHSS will visit your home to help you find sources of lead.• Your child should not be in the place of the lead source. If this is your home, an alternate place should be found to stay until the source of lead is removed or fixed. Your child needs to be tested within 1 month after treatment.
70 or higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your child needs medical treatment right away.• Your child needs medication to help decrease the lead level in the blood.• Your child might have to stay in a hospital, especially if your home has lead.• A highly trained individual from either your local health department or DHSS 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 within 2 to 4 weeks after treatment.

Child's Name: _____ Test Result: _____ mcg/dL Date: _____
If the test result is not written here, ask your doctor or nurse to write it down and save for your records.

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 or contact the Lead Licensing Program at 573-526-5873 or (toll-free) 888-837-0927.
- 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). In addition, other renovation projects may result in increased lead dust (e.g. sanding of ceramic tiles). Care is needed in all renovation projects to ensure that there is no increase in lead exposure.

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 cpsc.gov/recalls.
- Some jobs and hobbies can involve contact with lead. These include mining, battery manufacturing, 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.

- If you have lead pipes, let tap water run cold for one minute before using it, if it has not 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 water does *not* get rid of lead. Instead, the lead levels may be higher due to higher concentrations with evaporation.
- Use lead-free dishes. Don't serve or store food in pewter, crystal, or cracked pottery. Acidic foods, such as tomatoes and orange juice, may leach lead out of storage containers.
- Visit the websites 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, green leafy vegetables.
- Foods with iron: beans, lean meat, fortified cereal, 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. View a listing: health.mo.gov/living/lpha/lphas.php.
- Visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services website: health.mo.gov/lead.

