



Fayette County

April 2009

Health Beat

HEALTHY CHOICES • HEALTHY PEOPLE • HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The Medical Consequences of Lead Poisoning



Lead poisoning is the presence of too much lead in the body. Lead poisoning has no obvious signs and most children do not report any abnormal symptoms. Children with lead poisoning may exhibit stomachaches, decreased appetite, hyperactivity, sleeping problems or irritability. Because these early symptoms mimic other childhood problems, lead poisoning is sometimes mistaken for a cold or the flu. Later symptoms may include vomiting, weight loss and convulsions. Lead-poisoned children are often iron-deficient and are less able to use essential nutrients, like vitamin D. They also may suffer from learning disabilities, mental retardation, behavioral problems, lowered intelligence, stunted growth and hearing loss.

Children are at the greatest risk of lead poisoning because their small bodies absorb more lead than adult bodies do, and the lead hurts them more because their bodies are still growing. Lead often targets the developing brain and nervous system.

Children are also more likely to absorb lead dust due to certain behaviors. They are more likely to place hands and other objects that may carry lead dust into their mouths. Even unborn children can be hurt by lead. If a pregnant woman has an elevated blood lead level, the lead can pass from her blood to the blood of her unborn baby, causing damage similar to the problems seen in postnatal lead exposure.

The only way to diagnose lead poisoning is with a blood test, the test can be done by poking a child's finger or drawing blood from a vein. Illinois state law requires all children entering day care, preschool or kindergarten to provide proof of a blood lead test or assessment.

In Fayette County, our goal is to test every child who is 1 and 2 years old. A level of 10 mcg/dL or greater is considered unsafe. Children with blood lead levels of 10-25 mcg/dL may be placed on healthier diets and are monitored more closely to lower their risk of future lead exposures. Foods high in iron, calcium and vitamin C are recommended because they help the body to absorb less lead. In addition the parents are given educational information on ways to lower blood lead levels by proper hygiene and housekeeping. Parents are also informed of the need for follow up testing, to assure that the child's lead level is decreasing.

For children with blood lead levels of 45 mcg/dL or higher, special drugs, called chelators, may be used for treatment. Some physicians begin chelation at lower levels, often 25 mcg/dL. A home inspection is performed by a nurse and our regional inspector if the child has a blood lead level of >10 mcg/dL and is under 3 years of age. For children over 3 years of age, an inspection is done if the blood lead level is >20 mcg/dL.

Source: Illinois Department of Public Health

March 2009 Statistics

FAMILY & CLINICAL SERVICES

WIC

Active WIC Clients.....857
 WIC Services.....352
 Breast Feeding Women.....27
 Breast Feeding Peer Counseling.....61

Family Case Management

Active Families..... 307
 EPSDTs..... 77
 Pregnancy Tests..... 11
 ASQ:SEs101
 Edinburghs..... 56
 Denvers.....128
 Home Visits..... 17
 APORS Visits 3
 Healthwork Clients 13

Healthy Families Illinois

Families Served 46
 Home Visits..... 93
 Assessments 9

Doula

Families Served..... 16
 Home Visits.....45
 Doula Assisted Deliveries.....3

TPS

Clients18
 Graduated High School/GED 1

Genetics

Screenings40
 Clinics..... 1
 Patients Seen In Clinic 7
 Paternity testing.....6

Immunizations

Children.....415
 Adult 27
 Lab Draws..... 13
 Adult Injections.....9

Lead

Lead Screenings.....32
 Active Lead Cases.....8

Flu

Clinics.....0
 Flu Vaccinations0
 Pneumonia Vaccinations.....0

Diabetes

Diabetes Participants347
 New Participants Enrolled.....2

Smoking Cessation

New Break the Habit Smoking Cessation
 Clients 5
 Tobacco Quitline Calls.....29

Communicable Disease

New Cases 0
 Cases Closed 1

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

STD Cases Received & Reported..... 0

Tuberculosis

Investigations 0
 New Prophylactic Patients 0
 New Active Cases 0
 TB Tests.....32
 TB Screenings.....5

HOME HEALTH

Number of Current Patients46
 Total Served62
 Total Number of Visits 405
 Foot Care.....32

HOSPICE

Number of Patients14
 Number of Volunteers.....17
 Families in Bereavement 153

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Food Safety

Inspections.....27
 Re-Inspections 2
 Spot Checks 4
 Complaints 1
 Certifications 0
 Re-Certifications 0
 Pre-Openings..... 1

Tanning

Inspections..... 0
 Re-Inspections 0

Private Sewage

Plan Approvals 9
 Installations 7

Potable Water

Wells Permitted..... 1
 Wells Constructed..... 0
 Water Samples 9
 Non-Community 2

Complaints

Sewage Complaints 0
 Nuisance Complaints 3
 Resolved Complaints.....2
 Referred Complaints.....1

Wells Sealed

..... 0

Real Estate Surveys

..... 0

Sewage Compliance-

Vandalia Lake.... .. 0

West Nile Bird Submission

..... 0

Subdivision Review

..... 0

Rabies Specimen Submission

..... 0

Clinics

By Appointment Only

Tuesdays 8:30-4:30

- Lab Clinic
- Adult and Adolescent Immunizations
- TB testing

Fridays (schedule varies)

- Children's immunizations
- TB
- Lead screening