

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NATIONAL LEAD POISONING PREVENTION WEEK, OCTOBER 20-26, 2013

Oct. 20-26 is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. This year's theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of the many ways parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead and prevent its serious health effects. A child with lead poisoning can have trouble learning, paying attention and behaving well.

Based on data from a 2003-2004 national survey, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that nearly a quarter of a million children living in the United States have blood lead levels high enough to cause significant damage to their health. There are no known safe blood lead levels. Blood lead levels as low as 5mcg/dL have been known to cause serious health problems to children, including a drop in their "IQ".

According to Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer of the County of San Bernardino, lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 and lead-contaminated dust and soil are the main sources of lead exposure for children in the County. Children get lead poisoned by ingesting lead-contaminated dust, paint chips from deteriorating lead-based paint, and lead-contaminated soil.

Other sources of lead include lead dust brought home on parents' clothes, certain imported ceramic pottery, painted objects, traditional home remedies, and imported candies and food products. Additionally, parents engaging in activities that require contact with lead products, such as soldering, making stained glass, and handling bullets or fishing sinkers, can place children at risk.

The only way to know for sure if a child has lead poisoning is to have the child's blood tested for lead. If your child is 1 to 6 years old, talk to your doctor about testing your child for lead at his or her next visit. Fortunately, lead poisoning is entirely preventable.

For more information, call the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, at 1-800-722-3777.

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