

# Indiana Lead Free - Protecting Children From Lead Poisoning

## Frequently Asked Questions

Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, House Enrolled Act 1313 requires all Indiana healthcare providers serving children to offer lead testing to their patients.

### What is lead?

Lead is a toxic heavy metal that is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the earth's crust. While it has some beneficial uses, it can be toxic to humans and animals, causing health issues.

### Where is lead normally found?

Lead exposure for children in Indiana occurs primarily through lead-based paint. This paint is found particularly in buildings and housing built before 1980, which **makes up 57% of Indiana's housing**. Lead can also be found in air, soil and water, but these are less likely to cause high exposure.

### Why is lead dangerous?

Exposure could lead to long-term effects. This could include damage to the brain and nervous system, potentially leading to a lower IQ, slowed growth and development, learning and behavioral problems and hearing and speech problems. Lead is exceptionally dangerous for children under the age of three due to their rapidly developing brain and body.

### What is a safe level of lead?

No amount of lead is considered safe, but a level above 3.5 micrograms per deciliter from a confirmed blood test is considered elevated.

### When is testing recommended?

Testing is recommended at a child's one- and two-year check-ups but can be done at any time if a child hasn't been previously tested.

### How is it tested for?

There are two types of tests that can be done. The first is a venous blood draw where blood is drawn and sent to a lab for analysis. This is a one-and-done test. The second test is a capillary blood draw where a provider will prick a finger and collect several drops of blood either onto a card or into a tube and then either analyze the sample on-site or send it to a lab. If the capillary test results show your child has an elevated blood level, a second test is required. The availability of each test is dependent on the health care provider.

### What happens if a child has an elevated (5 or above) level of lead?

Your local health department will provide a home visit from a nurse to help figure out what your child may be getting into that could be a lead hazard, and they'll be able to help set up a home inspection with a licensed lead risk assessor who can come out and test the paint, dust and soil in and around your home to figure out what surfaces may be dangerous for your child. These resources are provided free of charge.

### How likely is it that my child has an elevated level?

Elevated levels are much more common in children who live in or visit older housing or have other risk factors, such as being born in another country, spending time with an adult whose job exposes him or her to lead, being a member of certain minority populations, or being exposed to old toys or items like reclaimed barnwood that may contain lead paint.

### Where is more available information about the Indiana Lead Free campaign?

Learn more at [www.IndianaLeadFree.org](http://www.IndianaLeadFree.org).

