



Westchester County Department of Health



2025.06

Community Health Data Report

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Childhood Lead Testing and Response, Westchester County, 2015-2024

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Lead is a metal element that can harm children when it gets into their bodies. Research has shown that no amount of lead exposure is safe. Blood lead levels (BLL) 5 micrograms per deciliter (ug/dL) or greater may require follow-up actions.

Exposure to lead in early childhood may result in long-lasting neurological damage, including behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, and permanently impaired intelligence. It is therefore important to control childhood lead exposure by prevention and early detection.

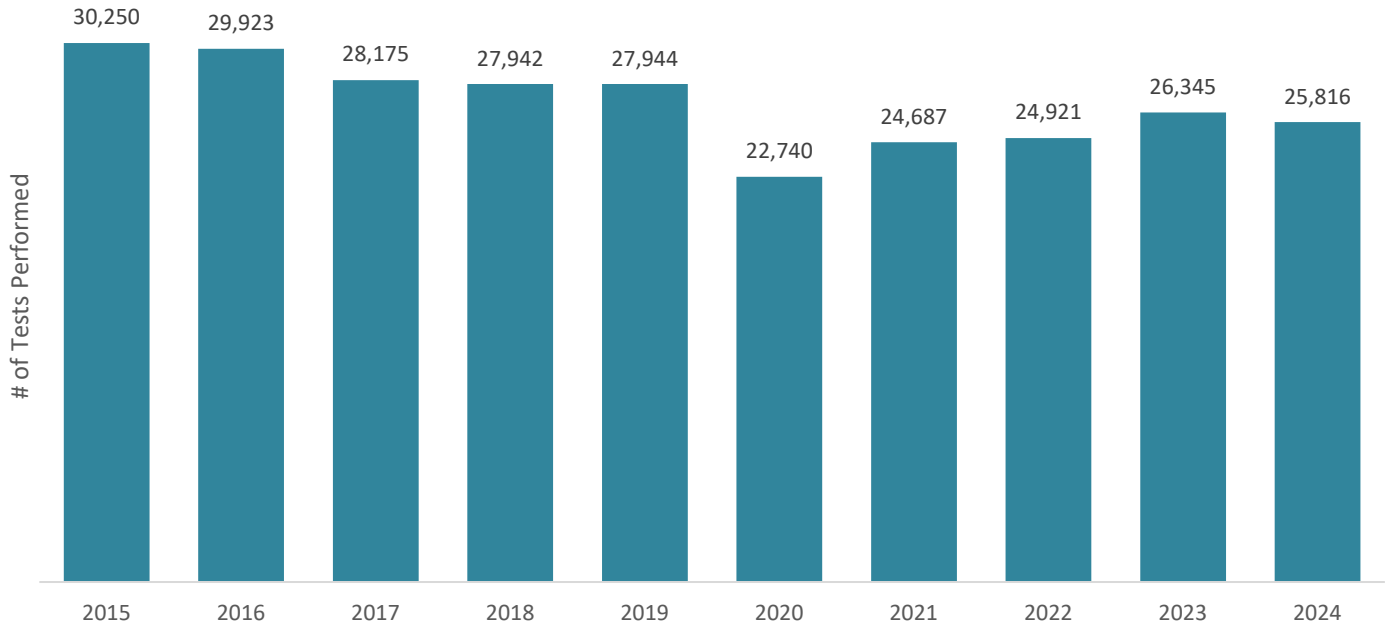
The Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) routinely monitors the testing results of childhood BLL and conducts follow-up investigations on children with elevated BLL results.

New York State Public Health Law requires that health care provider assess children 6 months to 6 years of age for risk of high lead exposure at each well-child visit. BLL testing is required at 1 year and again at 2 years of age, and also indicated at any age when heightened exposure risk is suggested by environmental or medical history. In 2019, the action level was revised, from 10µg/dL to 5µg/dL. In addition, the age range was revised from children 0-6 years to children 0-18 years. These significant policy changes authorized health departments to take a more proactive and effective approach to prevent childhood lead exposure.

The Childhood Lead Exposure Prevention Program allows health department to gain access to a child's housing, when a child has an elevated blood lead level, and to housing considered at high-risk for lead exposure, to inspect, detect, and control potential lead hazards.

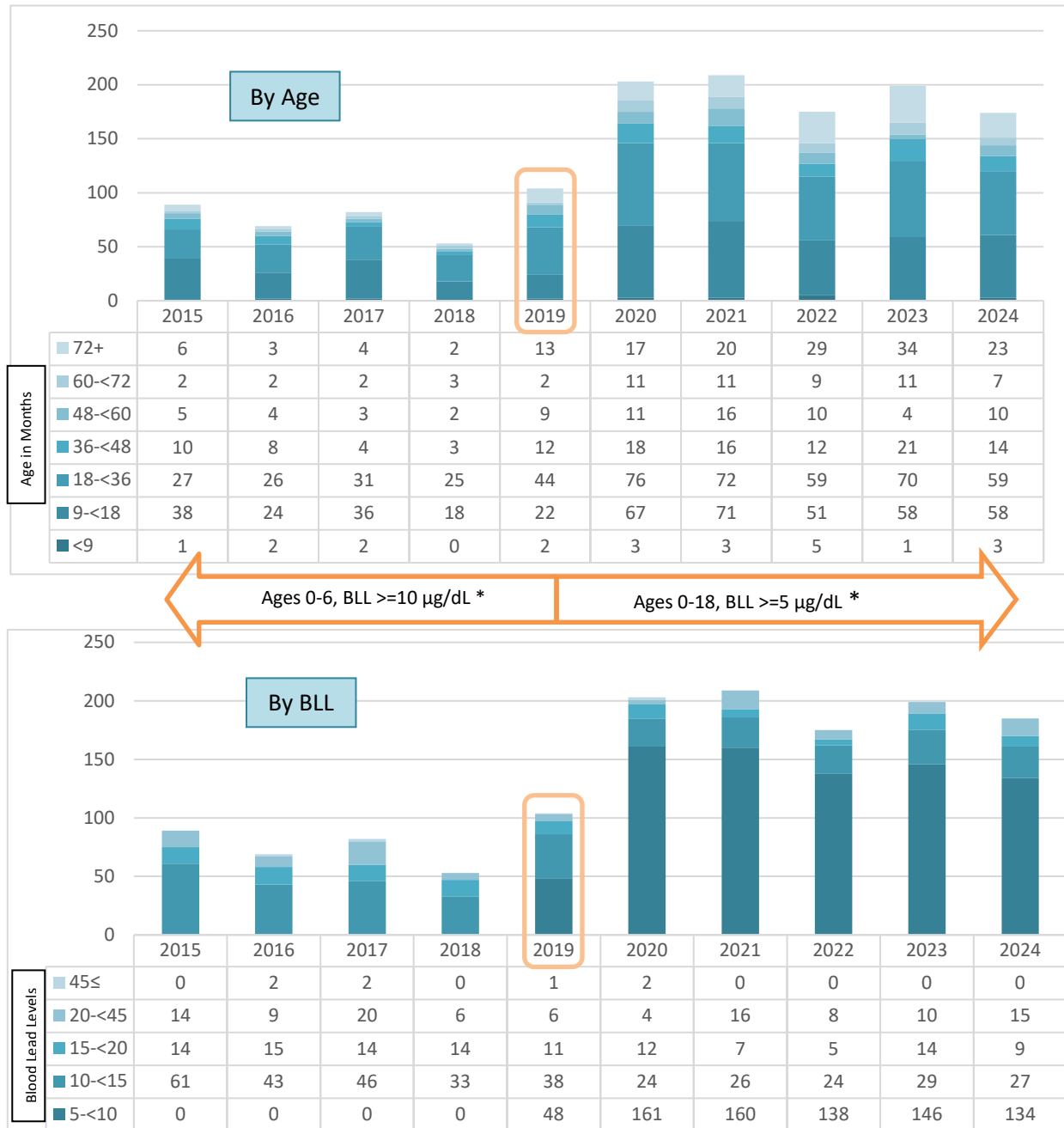
Blood Lead Testing

Number of Blood Lead Tests for Children, 2015-2024



Blood Lead Testing

Number of Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels*, 2015-2024



*In October 2019, the NYS Public Health Law lowered its “action” level to a venous BLL of 5µg/dL or higher, and specified that elevated lead levels be investigated for children 0-18, resulting in a large increase in the number of children referred for investigation compared to previous years.

Westchester County Department of Health Lead Exposure Prevention Program

The **Lead Exposure Prevention Program** conducts surveillance of childhood blood lead levels (BLL) to identify and track children with elevated (BLL) (venous BLL of 5µg/dL or greater). Such children are registered in the WCDOH Lead Registry. Health department staff investigate each case, conduct environmental inspections, and identify, mitigate, and/or remove the source(s) of lead. They educate families and ensure follow-up testing to monitor BLL. WCDOH enforces remediation of lead hazards and provides medical and environmental care management in collaboration with the child's health professional.

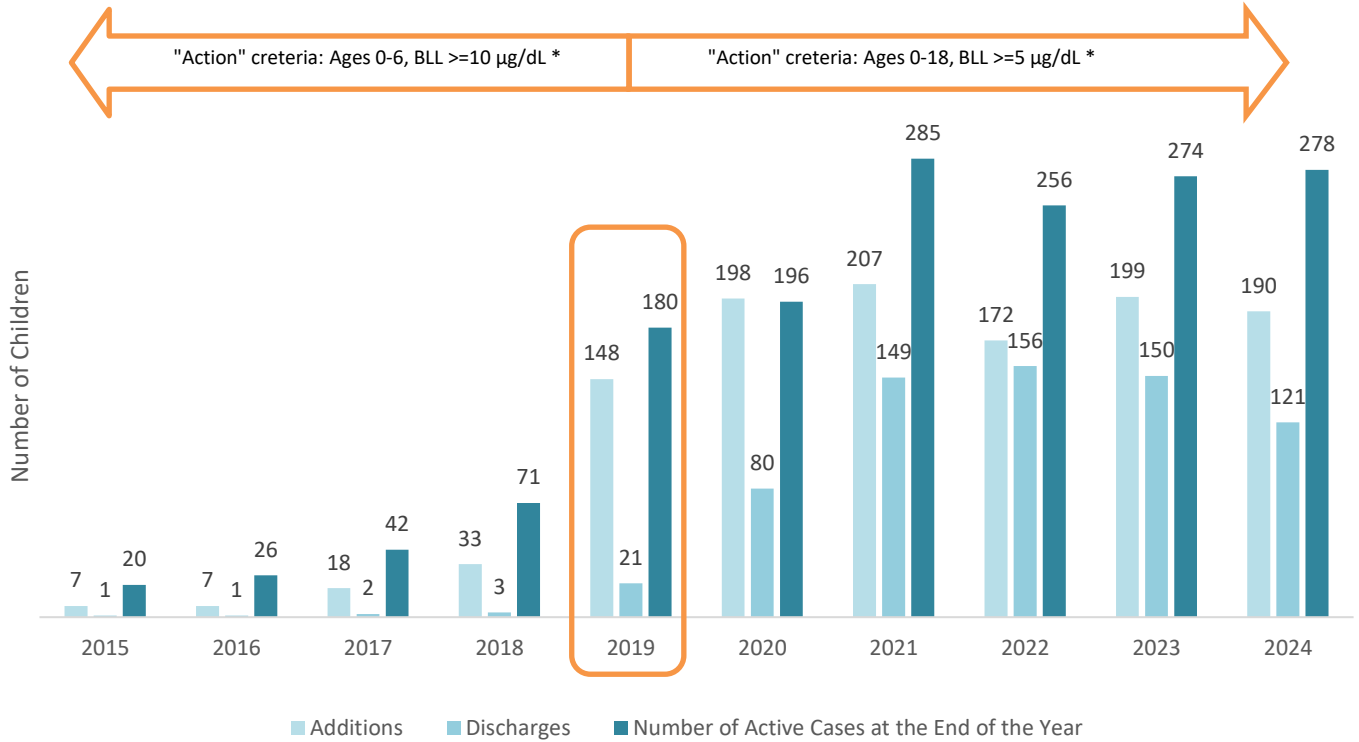
Cases are removed from the WCDOH Lead Registry only when additional follow-up has documented that the BLL in two consecutive venous tests are below 5µg/dL and environmental investigations have found no further hazard.

In addition, the Lead Exposure Prevention Program collaborates with other WCDOH programs and the Westchester community. Updates to public health law and guidelines for lead screening are distributed to community-based pediatric providers. Educational materials are delivered to women of childbearing age and pregnant women through prenatal care access providers and OB-GYN practices throughout Westchester County.

A new NYS program in lead exposure prevention provides funding to remediate lead hazards from rental units in selected communities with high risk of lead-exposure hazards in Westchester County, such as in Yonkers (10701 and 10705), Mount Vernon (10550) and New Rochelle (10801). The Lead Primary Prevention Program assesses housing in these zip codes for environmental lead hazards. WCDOH staff works with property owners to bring properties into compliance and minimize the risk of child lead exposure.

WCDOH Lead Exposure Prevention Program

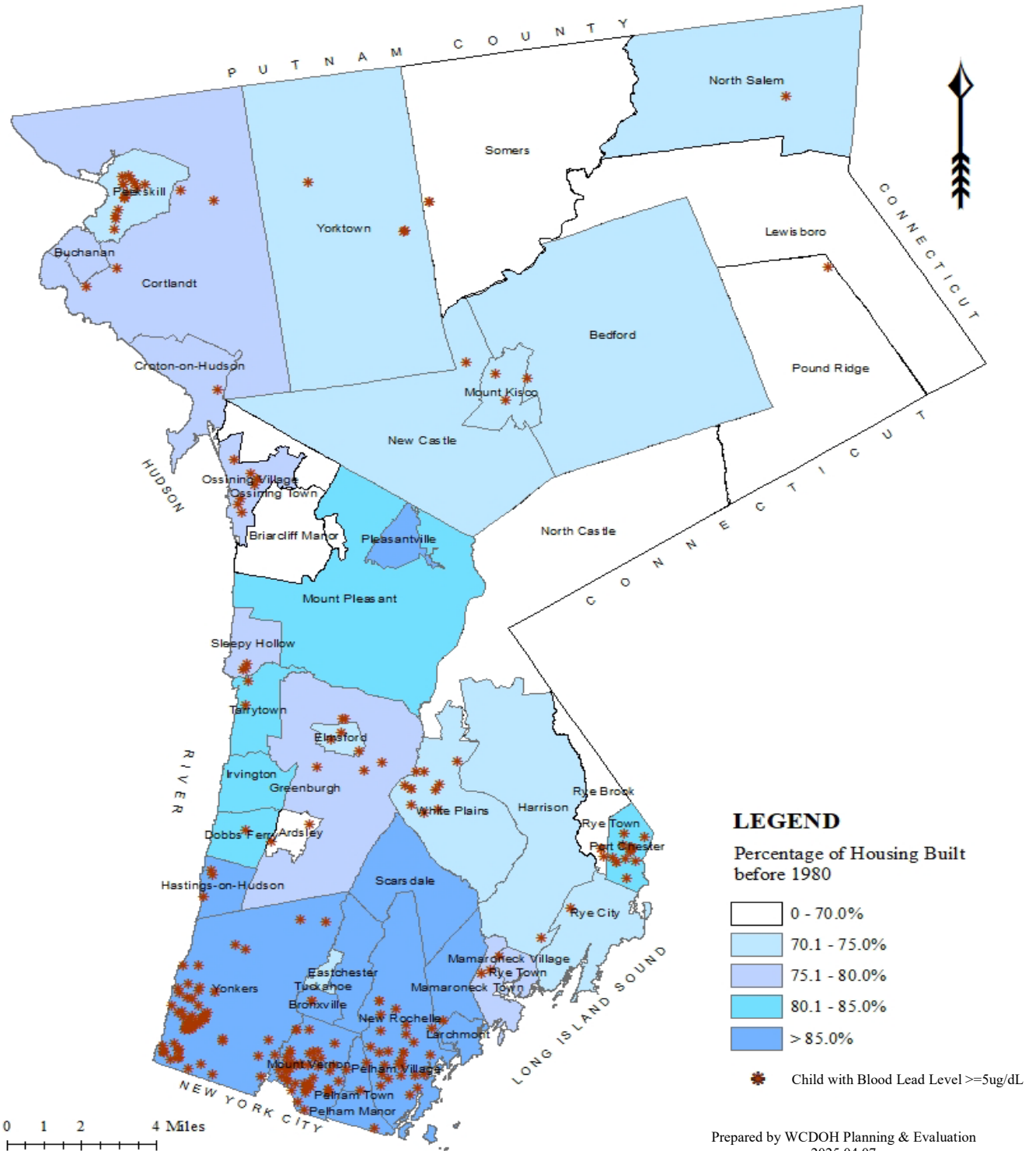
Number of Children on the WCDOH Lead Registry*, 2015-2024



*In October 2019, the NYS Public Health Law lowered its “action” level to a venous BLL of 5µg/dL or higher, and specified that elevated lead levels be investigated for children 0-18.

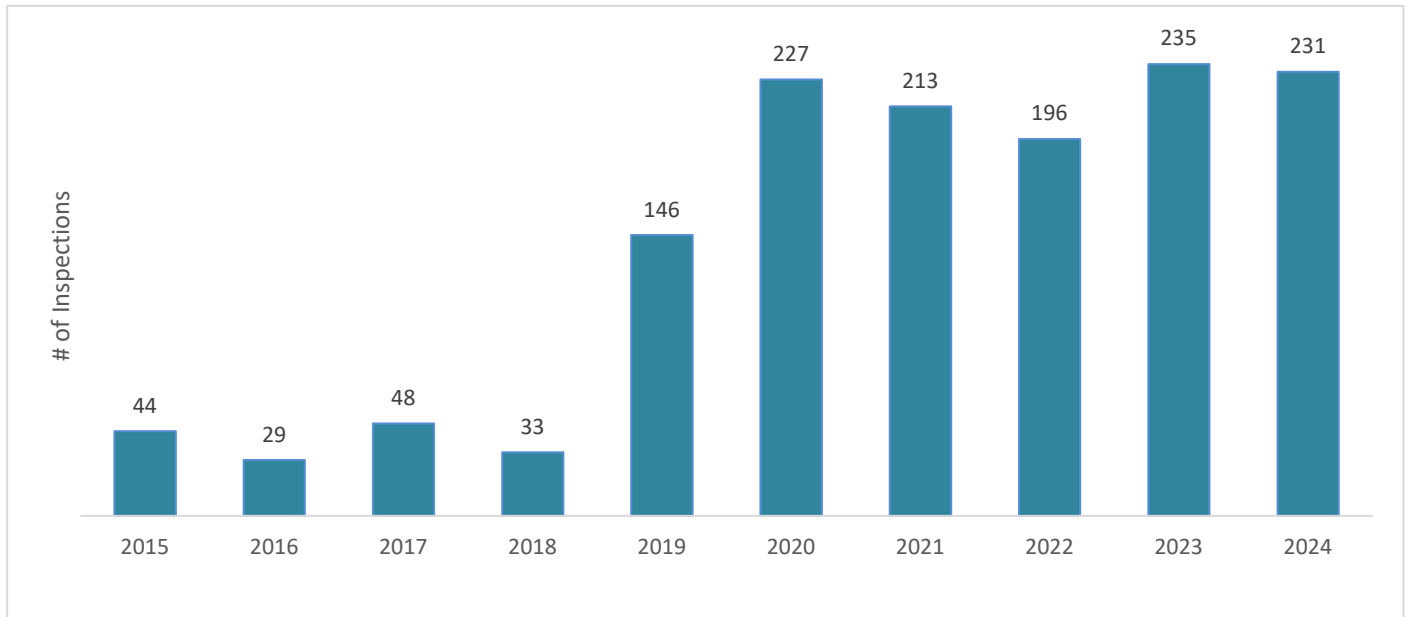
WCDOH Lead Exposure Prevention Program

Percentages of Houses Built Before 1980 and Locations of Lead Elevation Cases ($\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) in WCDOH Lead Exposure Registry, Westchester County, 2024



WCDOH Lead Exposure Prevention Program

Number of Household Lead Inspections Performed by WCDOH, 2015-2024



Keeping Your Family Safe from Lead

How to protect children

- Keep children away from peeling paint and broken plaster.
- Wash their hands after play, before meals, and before bed to rinse off any lead dust or dirt.
- Wash your child's toys often, especially teething toys. Learn more about product recalls including toys.
- Use cold water - not hot - for infant formula or cooking. Let the cold water tap run for at least a minute before using to flush lead picked up from pipes. Learn more about lead in drinking water.
- Store food from open cans in glass or plastic containers.
- Use lead-free dishes. Some dishes may have lead in their glazes. Don't use chipped or cracked dishes to store or serve food.
- Be careful with your hobbies. Some crafts call for use of paints, glazes and solder. Many of these may contain lead. Learn more about possible lead dangers while working on a hobby.
- Don't bring lead home with you from work. People who work at construction, plumbing, painting, auto repair and certain other jobs can be exposed to lead. Learn more about possible lead dangers while working on a construction site.
- Wash work clothes separately.
- Keep children away from remodeling and renovation sites. Old paint can have lead in it.
- Avoid having children play in soil especially around the foundations of older buildings and near roadways. Use a sandbox instead.
- When windows are open in warm weather, wash the sills and window wells any time you see dust, but at least once a month.
- Call your local health department for information about professionals who handle lead paint problems.
- If you are a renter, the Residential Tenants' Rights Guide can explain laws that can help you and provide resources to find more information about landlord and tenant issues, like lead.

Feed your family foods that get ahead of lead

Foods high in iron, calcium and Vitamin C can help prevent lead exposure:

- Iron – Protects from the harmful effects of lead
- Calcium – Makes it hard for lead to enter the body
- Vitamin C – Helps the body absorb iron and calcium better

*Taken from <https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

If you believe your child has been exposed to lead, contact your medical provider and have your child's blood lead level checked.

For more information on lead exposure, call the Westchester County Department of Health Lead Exposure Prevention Program at (914) 813-5240.

Recommended Actions for Blood Lead Level Tests

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 medical checkup about ways your child may have had contact with lead. Children who have had any 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, (venous test, which is more accurate).

Based on the test results, the following steps are recommended.

0 - 4 ug/dL

- Talk to your doctor about annual checkups to monitor your child's blood lead level (BLL).

5 - 9 ug/dL

- Talk to your doctor about obtaining follow-up blood lead level appointments within 3-6 months for the child.
- Ask your doctor about testing any siblings in the home.
- The Westchester County Health Department (WCDH) will provide education to reduce risk to your child through nutrition, house cleaning and hygiene.
- Your child will be put on the WCDH Lead Prevention Program (LPP) Tracking List to ensure blood lead testing follow-up.

10 - 14 ug/dL

- Talk to your doctor about obtaining follow-up blood lead level appointments within 3 months for the child.
- Ask your doctor about testing any siblings in the home.
- Your child will be put on the WCDH Lead Prevention Program (LPP) Tracking List to ensure blood lead testing follow-up.

15 - 44 ug/dL

- Your doctor will schedule your child for follow-up blood lead level (BLL) tests every month until <15 mcg/dL; then every 3 months until BLL is less than 10 mcg/dL. Additional tests will be scheduled every 6 months when BLL is less than 10 mcg/dL.
- Other siblings in the home should be tested for lead exposure: call the Health Department for information.
- Your child will be entered on the WCDH LPP Lead Registry.
- A WCDH lead inspector will come to your home to inspect for lead paint and any other sources of lead exposure.
- A nurse will contact you for an appointment to review lead exposure prevention and perform a developmental screening test.
- Your doctor may refer you to the Regional Lead Exposure Resource Center at Montefiore Medical Center for evaluation.

45 + ug/dL

- Follow guidance for 15 - 44 mcg/dL, plus:
- Your doctor will refer you to the regional lead exposure resource center at Montefiore Medical Center for immediate treatment and evaluation.