

Environmental Investigation Procedures: For Homes of Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels

- ***Communicating with parent/guardian:*** Determine language and literacy. If non-English speaking, arrange for an interpreter. Select appropriate educational materials based on language and reading level.
- ***Schedule Interview/Investigation:*** Ask parent/guardian when would be a good time for interview, and who will be present at that time of this visit. Most small children have a regular schedule. Work with the family's schedule.
- ***Determine Age of Housing:*** Contact county tax assessor's office to determine age of housing (many people do not know this information). Older housing (pre-1950) is more likely to have lead-based paint and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.
- ***Administer Questionnaire:*** Administering questionnaire in person will enable you to observe parent/guardian reactions to questions. Questionnaire is designed to help discover potential lead exposure sources. Follow-up questions may be needed to clarify responses. Get answers to every question. Even if the answer is "Don't know", record it. Ask open-ended questions when ever possible, but don't ask leading questions.
- ***Visit the Home:***
 1. ***Visual Assessment:*** Use your inspection and observation skills to assess the environment. A list of things to look for is on back of this sheet.
 2. ***Administer/Review Questionnaire:*** Take time to review unclear or incomplete answers on questionnaire. Ask follow up questions, and use open-ended questions.
 3. ***Note and follow up on all possible exposure sources:*** Frequently there is more than one identifiable source. Don't jump to conclusions. Keep an open mind.
 4. ***Take environmental samples:*** Only a Certified Risk Assessor can perform environmental sampling (dust, soil, and paint chip). Contact Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for assistance. Take water samples only when there is reason to suspect lead such as in well water, lead-soldered plumbing, and/or new brass fixtures.
- ***Communicate Results of Investigation*** (See sample letter): Write a letter to the parents/guardians explaining the following:
 1. When and why you visited their home
 2. What samples were taken, where they were taken and what were the results (consult with OHA or a Certified Risk Assessor)
 3. If lead hazards were found, what do they mean
 4. What can parents do to address the lead hazards you found
 5. Identify local remediation resource if available, advise need for follow-up blood lead testing (coordinate with PHN if applicable), and send additional educational material as needed.
 6. Send copy of questionnaire, testing results, follow-up letter, and all case management documentation to: **Oregon Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.**

Things to Look for During On-Site Investigations

Housing Built Before 1978: Note following for investigation follow-up letter.

1. Peeling, worn or deteriorated paint.
2. Paint chips, paint dust, and any chalky residue found inside and outside the house.
3. Dust in window troughs/wells, windowsills, and floors directly under windows.
4. Friction or abrasion areas: windows, doors, cabinets, painted steps, etc.
5. Recent remodeling activities: new surfaces, new windows, changes in floor plan, paint preparation, disturbing of paint.

All Housing:

1. Worn or peeling paint found on furniture, toys or other household objects.
2. Vinyl mini blinds: older ones may still be a source of lead.
3. Painted or vinyl/plastic toys. Look at toy recall list.
4. Teeth marks or other signs of chewing on objects or surfaces

Interior: Check for deteriorated paint, and test with LeadCheck swabs. Advise replacement of vinyl mini-blinds if these are old or not known to be lead-free. Advise “lead-safe” repair or removal of all paint in poor condition as well as the repair of any condition that causes peeling paint, leaks, poor ventilation, etc. Information on “lead-safe” remodeling is available by phoning 971.673.0440 or on the Web at www.healthoregon.org/lead. Consult with OHA about dust wipe sampling, or contract a Certified Risk Assessor.

Exterior: Check exposed soil and dirt areas, especially where children and pets play. Note location of all play and bare soil areas. Consult with OHA about soil sampling, or contract a Certified Risk Assessor. Recommend removing bare soil with high lead levels (≥ 400 ppm) or covering with 6 inches of bark dust or pea gravel, or grass.

Other Sources of Lead (obtain permission to check suspected items):

- Imported, old or improperly glazed pottery: Advise not to use for food preparation, cooking, serving or storage. Use LeadCheck swabs to check for lead.
- Lead-containing objects: Items like pewter serving trays, statuary, toys, fishing weights, bullets, leaded glass, etc. Advise against exposure to these objects.
- Lead-related jobs and hobbies: home remodeling and painting; battery and radiator work, car and boat repair; shooting sports. Advise family members to avoid “take-home” lead exposures by careful hygiene practices, and changing contaminated clothes at work. Store and wash work/hobby clothes separately. Restrict child’s access to lead activity areas. Employer should check Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).
- Cultural medicines, home remedies and cosmetics: Look for home remedies or cosmetics that are stored in unmarked containers or have foreign labels. Expect adults to be reluctant to talk about home/cultural remedies. Try to get a sample and consult with OHA for analysis. Recommend not using these medications until samples are found to be lead-free.
- Objects containing lead solder, copper plumbing: Recommend that family run water for 30 seconds (or until cold) before use. Advise against using hot tap water for drinking, cooking and especially mixing baby food or formula. Test water if you know or suspect the plumbing has lead solder.
- Other items in the yard or storage that might contain lead: Old boards, other painted building materials or old batteries. Take samples if appropriate and advise removal.