



# **What do the lead sampling results at North Ridge Estates mean for my family and me?**

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Fact sheet 1

## **Overall, what do the lead sampling results tell us?**

- Samples show there is not an elevated health risk from exposure to lead in soil at North Ridge Estates.
- Sampling indicates that the soil at residences does not contain lead at levels that would cause adverse health effects.
- Exposure to soil from North Ridge Estates is unlikely to result in elevated blood lead levels in residents.

**SHINE is on the Web!**  
[www.healthoregon.org/superfund](http://www.healthoregon.org/superfund)

## **Was there any lead contamination found in the soil at North Ridge Estates?**

The EPA took 150 soil samples in July 2003. Sampling results indicate that lead levels in soil at residences do not pose an elevated health risk to North Ridge Estates residents. One isolated soil sample at a vacant property was elevated. \*

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that has been mined, processed, and used in commercial and household products for thousands of years. In the past, lead was used in paint, gasoline, pottery, water pipes, and other products. Once lead enters the environment, there is no way to destroy it or make it harmless.

In April 2003, the Oregon Department of Human Service's Superfund Health Investigation and Education (SHINE) Program recommended that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sample for lead in the soil at North Ridge Estates to determine whether lead-based paint used in the demolished military buildings on the site resulted in elevated lead levels.

## **Should I be concerned about any health effects from lead in the soil?**

SHINE and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) do not consider the soil at residences at North Ridge Estates to contain lead at levels that would cause adverse health effects. Likewise, exposure to soil is not expected to be the source of elevated blood lead levels for children or adults living at North Ridge Estates.

## **Does SHINE Recommend Blood Lead Screening at North Ridge Estates?**



SHINE and ATSDR are not recommending a blood lead screening for residents of North Ridge Estates. Both adults and children are unlikely to have elevated levels from exposure to soils at North Ridge. However, there may be other sources of lead, especially if your house or apartment building was built before 1978. The older the home, the greater the chance that lead-based paint is present, and the more important it is to test your home for lead.

If you suspect that your home has lead based paint, a blood test is available to screen children for lead exposure and should be readily available at your health care providers office for a small fee.

## **Who can I contact for more information?**

For more information about health effects of lead and testing information, please call the Oregon Leadline at 1-800-368-5060.

The Environmental Protection Agency is working to identify and implement cleanup at North Ridge Estates. Contact Judy Smith, 503-326-6994 with questions.

The DHS Superfund Health Investigation and Education Program (SHINE) is investigating the public health significance of sampling results at this site. For more information contact Janice Panichello at 503-872-5359.



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## **How can my family be exposed to lead?**

Most childhood lead exposures result from exposure to household dust containing lead from lead-based paint. Lead-based paint can also be a major source of lead-contaminated soil around the home as a result of peeling or chipping paint and remodeling activities. Lead can also be found in lead pipes or solder, imported or older ceramics and pottery, certain hobbies and folk medicines. If children are exposed to hobbies such as using or making fish sinkers, welding, making bullets, stained glass, ceramics, or jewelry, or refinishing furniture or painting, they may also come into contact with lead dusts.

Adult exposure commonly occurs from exposure to lead used in the workplace. Workers may inhale lead dust and fumes directly, or swallow lead dust while eating, drinking, or smoking on the job. Adults can be exposed during certain hobbies and activities where lead is used.

## **What are the health effects from exposure to lead?**

Lead can affect almost every system and organ in your body. The most sensitive is the central nervous system, particularly in children. Lead also damages kidneys and the reproductive system. The effects are the same whether it is breathed or swallowed.

At high levels, lead may decrease reaction time, cause weakness in the fingers, wrists, or ankles, and possibly affect the memory. Lead may cause anemia, a disorder of the blood. It can also damage the male reproductive system. The connection between exposure to low levels of lead and these effects is uncertain.

## **\*What are the next steps for cleanup and assessment of lead in the soil?**

As part of the ongoing assessment and cleanup actions at the site, EPA will conduct further testing to determine the size and accessibility of the one area where lead levels were high and, if determined to be necessary, develop a cleanup plan to remove or remediate contaminated soil in that area. No additional site-wide characterization for lead in the soil is planned or indicated.

## **Where can I find additional information?**

- At the request of EPA, SHINE reviewed initial lead sampling results. The "Lead Samples at North Ridge Estates" memo is available on the SHINE website at <http://www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/superfund/consult.cfm>.
- ATSDR Tox Faqs - Lead <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts13.html>
- ATSDR Public Health Statement - Lead <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/phs13.html>

