

Environmental Health

Elevated blood lead levels among adults

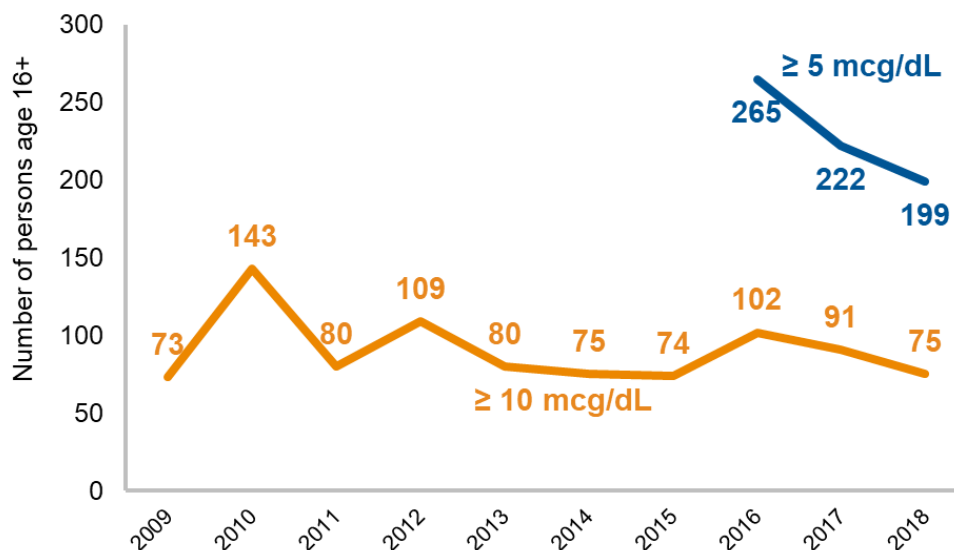
Lead exposure can cause acute and chronic adverse effects in multiple organ systems. Research shows that, even at low levels, lead exposure can contribute to adverse cardiovascular and kidney effects, cognitive impairment, and adverse reproductive outcomes.

Exposure to lead while working is the most common reason an adult would have elevated blood lead levels. In addition, several non-occupational sources of lead exposure include hobbies such as: target shooting, automobile restoration and painting, home painting and renovation, making jewelry or stained glass, and casting lead sinkers or bullets.

We defined elevated blood lead level (EBLL) as a blood lead level of 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) from 2009 until 2015, when we changed the definition to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. In Oregon between 2009-2018 an average of 90 adults each year had confirmed blood lead levels of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or higher. In the three years since we lowered the definition to 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, an average of 229 adult EBLLs have been reported each year (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Persons age 16+ with elevated blood lead levels (EBLL) by year, Oregon



Source: Healthy Homes, Schools and Workplaces Program

Additional Resources:

Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance Program
(www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ABLES/description.html)

ATSDR Lead Toxicity
(<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/csem/csem.asp?csem=7&po=0>)

National Toxicology Program
(<https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/pubhealth/hat/noms/lead/index.html>)

About the Data: All blood lead test results are a reportable in Oregon. Results reported are managed by the Occupational Public Health Program which is part of Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division.

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[Oregon State Health Profile](#)

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