

# FACT SHEET

## Lead Poisoning

As part of its Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment program (also known as Healthchek), the Ohio Medicaid program strives to protect Ohio's children from lead poisoning. Ohio Medicaid data shows that approximately 60 percent of Medicaid-eligible children younger than age six live in areas that are considered high risk for lead poisoning. To decrease the prevalence of lead among these children, Ohio Medicaid requires mandatory blood lead testing for all Medicaid-eligible one and two-year-old children, in accordance with state and federal requirements. Additionally, Medicaid-eligible children between the ages of 36 and 72 months of age must have a blood lead test unless there is documentation that the child has been previously tested. These blood tests can be done at any physician visit. Physicians may also refer a child to have a lead test at another site with a doctor's order.

### What is Lead Poisoning?

Lead poisoning happens when lead is absorbed by the body through breathing or swallowing a contaminated substance. The most common source of lead exposure for children is deteriorated lead-based paint often found in homes built prior to 1950. Older homes are more likely to have lead paint and pipes that contaminate drinking water. Other sources of lead include:

- Polluted air, water and soil
- Lead-based paint chips or dust
- Food and juice stored in cans not made in the United States

Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, slowed growth, hearing loss, and developmental delays. Pregnant women with lead poisoning can pass lead to their unborn child, which can cause miscarriage, still birth, premature delivery, and low birth weight. Symptoms include digestive problems (like diarrhea, stomach aches, or vomiting), fatigue, headaches, tooth decay and loss of appetite. Often, symptoms of lead poisoning are not visible.

### Lead Testing Performance Goal

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) tracks lead testing performance among Medicaid children and reports its findings annually to the federal government. The current ODJFS performance goal is to reach a blood lead testing rate of 60 percent among all one and two-year-old children enrolled in the Medicaid program. Annual statistics that measure Ohio Medicaid lead testing rates can be found at the Web site below. In the upcoming year, Ohio Medicaid will incorporate the new National Center for Quality Assurance (NCQA), HEDIS health care performance measure for blood lead testing as recommended by the Center for Disease Control and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

To meet the goal of increased blood lead testing, ODJFS partners with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and others to initiate activities that address Ohio's plan to eliminate lead poisoning. The collaboration of efforts has almost doubled the lead testing rates for Medicaid enrolled children within the last five years. For questions about lead poisoning and prevention, contact ODH's Ohio Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OCLPPP): (614) 644-9849.

### Information on the Web

For Medicaid Consumers: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/bhpp/lpplpt/consumerlead.stm>

For Medicaid Providers: <http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/bhpp/lpplpt/providerlead.stm>

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