

March 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians of School Age Children:

Lead in drinking water has been in the news recently. Parents/guardians are right to be concerned about childhood lead exposure. However, the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning wants you to know that the main sources for childhood lead poisoning in New York State is ***paint in homes built before 1978, and renovation projects that do not follow lead safe work practices***, not drinking water. The Coalition wants you to know that ***lead content found in water fountains does not pose a significant risk for children.***

It is NYS law that ***every child get tested for lead at age one and again at age two.*** And yet, only about 60% of the one year olds and about 25% of the two year olds get tested for exposure to lead in Monroe County. We can do better! It is vitally important to get that second test, as that is the time when babies begin exploring their world, spend a lot of time on the floor, and where the majority of lead dust can be found.

What can you do?

- 1) Check with your doctor and make sure your child has had a **blood test for lead.**
- 2) Be sure to learn your child's test result. If your child's blood lead level is 5 ug/dL (micrograms per deciliter) or over, a parent/guardian can call the Monroe County Dept. of Public Health at (585) 753-5087 and request a FREE environmental investigation to determine the source of the lead hazard. This will help pinpoint the source of the lead in your home, serve as your best defense in controlling the source of lead, and help to prevent any further poisoning.
- 3) If your child's blood lead level is 8 ug/dL (micrograms per deciliter) or over, the Monroe County Dept. of Public Health will contact you.
- 4) If you live in the City of Rochester, in a home built before 1978, please call (585) 428-6520 and request a **FREE inspection for lead hazards.** Renters too! Anyone can request an inspection. You do not need a landlord's permission. It's the law in Rochester that all families with children who rent a home are entitled to live in lead safe housing. Make sure your home is lead safe
- 5) If you live in Monroe County (outside the City of Rochester) and you want to get your home tested for lead hazards, please hire an EPA certified inspector. DIY home lead tests are not 100% accurate and are not recommended. The Coalition has a list of local **EPA Certified Risk Assessment Firms** at www.letsmakeleadhistory.org.

- 6) **Make sure anyone you hire to do any work that disturbs a painted surface in your pre-1978 home, is certified by the EPA in Renovation, Repair & Painting (RRP).** Its federal law that all workers doing any renovation work in a pre-1978 home MUST be RRP certified. There are FREE classes that anyone can take (homeowners too) to become EPA RRP certified. Learn how to work safely doing any renovation work in your pre-1978 home.
- 7) Why is it so important to have someone who follows RRP requirements do renovation work? In 2006/07, 14% of the children lead poisoned in New York State were due to home renovation projects done improperly. 66% of the people who did the renovation work in these cases were DIY homeowners who accidentally lead poisoned their own children. Lead is like asbestos. It's dangerous only when disturbed. All it takes is a sugar packet worth of dust to consider a home contaminated with lead. Following RRP guidelines is not just a good idea, it's the law.
- 8) Does your **town building permit application require proof of EPA RRP certification?** The City of Rochester and Town of Irondequoit do—ask your town officials why they haven't made similar revisions to their building permits.
- 9) Still concerned about your water? Flush the line for several minutes before drinking and/or get a water filter that attaches to a faucet *which filters for lead* (such as PUR. Please note that Brita filters DO NOT filter lead). Refer to the NFS for additional information about water filtration systems (www.nsf.org/). Remember to change the filter as directed by the manufacturer. Learn more at: www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/water.htm.

Take steps to protect your family from lead poisoning:

- 1) Know and understand that lead hazards may exist in your child's environment.
- 2) Have your home tested for lead hazards.
- 3) Make sure your child receives a blood test from your doctor at one and again at two and anytime you think your child may have been exposed to a lead hazard.
- 4) Make sure anyone you hire to do renovation work in your pre-1978 home is EPA RRP certified.

The Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning has lots of information at www.letsmakeleadhistory.org or call (585) 224-3125. Remember, in Monroe County, childhood lead poisoning is not coming from our water.