



# Why should you have your child tested for lead?

1.

Lead poisoning is one of the most common, yet preventable environmental health hazards that can affect a family, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. **Illinois ranks as one of the highest states in the nation for childhood lead poisoning.**



2.

There is **no safe level of lead in the body**. Lead is a poison and even small amounts can cause harm to the body and brain development. The effects of lead in the body are not reversible. Lead can be stored in the body for many years. A level of 5 µg/dL or greater is considered to be an elevated blood lead level.



3.

Possible sources of lead are commonly found in paint from homes built before 1978, drinking water, items made outside the U.S. (especially folk medicines and spices), and family members who have hobbies or occupations that expose them to lead.



4.

Exposure to lead in childhood has been linked to developmental delays, short and long-term health problems, and academic difficulties. Children exposed to lead can experience life-long complications that affect their ability to think, learn, and behave. Children may display no immediate symptoms to lead exposure.



5.

Your child should be evaluated by their medical provider for risk of lead exposure at ages 12 and 24 months and 3,4,5, and 6 years of age. Depending on lead risks in your community, the medical provider will either order blood lead testing as part of routine care or use a risk questionnaire to determine if blood lead testing is necessary. If any answers on the risk questionnaire are “yes” or “unknown,” you should have your child tested for lead.

