Look Out For Lead

What happens during an environmental lead assessment of my home?



SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

When you take your child to your health care provider for a well child visit around 12 months and 24 months of age, your child might be tested for lead.

Q: How will my child be tested for lead?

A: A blood lead test includes cleaning the child's finger or heel, then using a small device to prick the finger or heel to get a small sample of blood. Sometimes, a blood lead test will be collected from the child's arm. This blood will be tested to see if there is any lead in it.

Q: What should I do if they tell me there is lead in my child's blood?



A: Talk to your doctor or nurse. They can explain what the blood lead level means, and let you know when your child will need to come back for another test.

If the blood lead level from the finger test was high, it is very important for your health care provider to get another sample of blood — this time from a vein — to do another test.

If your child has a high blood lead level, it is important to ask your health care provider to test other young children who live in your home.

Q: What if the blood sample from my child's vein has lead in it?

A: If the lead is at a certain level, your health care provider may talk to you about how to protect your child from lead. It is important to wash your child's hands often, and to keep them from putting things into their mouths.

Your provider may ask you about items in your home that could contain lead, such as imported food or spices, antique painted toys, or fishing weights. The provider might ask if any adult in your family has a job or hobby that involves lead.

Your provider should schedule your child for another blood lead test. It may be in a few weeks or a few months, depending on how high your child's blood lead level is. It is important to keep this appointment.

If the lead is at a higher level, you might be contacted by a Public Health Nurse from a DPH Health Department. DPH has a Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP).

Q: What do I do if a DPH nurse calls me about my child's lead level?

A: Be sure to call back if you miss a call from the nurse. The nurse might offer to do a home visit to talk to you about lead. Answer the nurse's questions as completely as you can. It is important for the nurse to get as much information as possible, so that DPH can help you and your child. The nurse might suggest an environmental lead assessment to help identify possible sources of lead in your home or in other places where your child spends time regularly.

Q: What is an "environmental lead assessment" and how long will it take?

A: An environmental lead assessment is a visit to your home by trained staff to help identify possible sources of lead. The nurse and an EPA-certified lead risk assessor will come to your home. They will ask you questions to help find possible sources of lead.

During the visit, the lead risk assessors will use a machine, called an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzer. The XRF machine can check painted surfaces, inside and out, and help the assessors identify lead hazards.



The team will also take dust and soil samples, and might test other items such as food, water, toys, furniture, or jewelry. The visit might take a couple of hours, depending upon the size of the house, the condition of the paint, and other factors.

Q: Do my children and I need to leave the home during this assessment?

A: No, you do not need to leave. It is important for you to be at the home and available to show the assessors around the property and answer any questions that they might have. Your children may be at home if this is convenient for you.

Q: What do I need to do to prepare for this visit?

A: Make sure your schedule will allow you to be at your home and available to talk with the nurse and risk assessors for as long as necessary during the assessment. You do not need to do anything to your home to prepare for the visit. The lead risk assessors will need to look all around your home during the visit, because lead dust can travel from one part of the home to another.



The lead risk assessors and the Public Health Nurse will also talk with you about your child's activities, toys, and development. This helps them understand how your child might have been exposed to lead. If there are items that your child regularly puts into his or her mouth, such as toys, jewelry, or keys, have those items available for the risk assessors to examine.

Q: When will I find out the results of the environmental lead assessment?

A: The lead risk assessors will talk with you about what they have found once they have completed the assessment. If lead paint was found in your home and was determined to be a hazard, they will show you where they saw high levels of lead with the XRF machine.

Dust, soil, and other samples will need to go to a laboratory for analysis. It may take several weeks to get results of those tests.

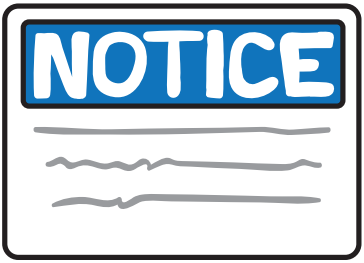
Once all the test results are back, the risk assessor will send you a written report. If you are renting or leasing your home, a copy of the report will also be sent to the property owner or management company, so that they can know what lead risks were found in your home.

Q: How do I know what the results mean?

A: The report will explain the process that the risk assessors used at your home. It will also provide test results from the XRF machine and from any samples that were sent to a laboratory. The report will explain what these results mean and will list several things that you can do to fix any hazards that were identified. If no hazards were found, it will say that, too.

Q: If lead hazards are found at my home, what does DPH do?

A: If lead hazards are found at the home, DPH will post a "Notice" stating that lead hazards have been found.



DPH will send a report, listing all lead hazards identified and providing recommendations for addressing those hazards. The report will be sent to you and to the property owner, if you do not own the property.

With your permission, DPH will also send a summary of the report to your child's health care provider. This is so the provider can help support you in your efforts to protect your child from lead.

DPH does not make referrals to DSS based on the presence of lead hazards in a home.

DPH does not provide landlord/tenant advice.

Q: If lead hazards are found in my home, what do I do?

A: The report that you get from the lead risk assessors will list several ways of fixing — or remediating — the hazards. There may be a range of options, from easy no-cost, to more involved and costly methods.

If there are several lead-paint hazards, the safest thing to do is to hire someone who has been specially trained to deal with them. Sometimes, doing it yourself can make the lead hazard worse. Hiring someone who has been trained in lead-safe work practices can help keep your family safe while the repair work is being done. If someone says they have been trained in lead-safe work practices, they should show you proof of that training.

The Environmental Protection Agency website, EPA.gov/Lead, has some helpful resources. You may also call DPH at 866-466-5323 for more information.

Q: Once the lead hazards have been repaired, what do I do?

A: You should stay in touch with the lead risk assessors who visited your home while the work is being done on your house, especially if you have any questions. Once the hazards that were listed in the report have been fixed, call the risk assessors and let them know.They will arrange a time to come back to the house and do some clearance testing. This will help you know that the hazards are gone, and that the house was cleaned properly by the people who did the repairs. If the lead hazards are gone, DPH will remove the "Notice".

Questions?

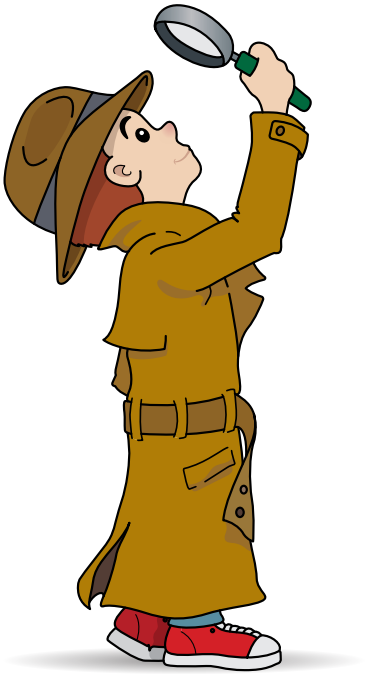
1-866-4NO-LEAD

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South Carolina...
Lead-Safe for Life.

dph.sc.gov/childhoodlead



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