

10-22-07

## National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Starting October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. Now is the time to familiarize ourselves with the dangers associated with lead exposure, particularly lead-paint hazards in the home. Lead, a highly toxic metal that was used in products in and around our homes for years, causes a range of health effects from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to seizures and death. Children six and under are most at risk. Lead recently made news when toys were recalled due to violations of the lead paint standard.

Research suggests that the top three sources of lead exposure for children are: 1. deteriorating lead-based paint, 2. lead contaminated dust, and 3. lead contaminated residential soil. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 1978 there were 13.5 million children in the U.S. with elevated blood lead levels. There are things you can do to minimize your child's risk to lead poisoning, such as: cleaning and maintaining your home, having your child's blood lead levels checked, and promoting proper nutrition. The Central Michigan District Health Department provides lead screenings for their WIC clients. Please contact the Health Department at 989-773-5921 for more information.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "lead exposure in young children has been drastically reduced over the last three decades due to federal, state and local regulations that banned lead in gasoline and house paint, and efforts to reduce or cleanup lead in industrial emissions, drinking water, consumer goods, hazardous sites and other sources. Facts about lead: Lead exposure can harm young children and babies even before they are born. Even children who seem healthy can have high levels of lead in their body. You can get lead in your body by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil or paint chips containing lead. You have many options for reducing lead hazards. In most cases, lead-based paint that is in good condition is not a hazard. Removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family. If you would like more information about how to protect your child from lead poisoning, please visit [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead), or you can speak to an information specialist by contacting the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD.

There are 35 toys listed on the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission web site regarding toy recalls. If you would like to view recalls pertaining to toys or otherwise, please consult their web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov), and click "Press room," "press releases," "toys." Another hazard that I have been hearing about lately is regarding candle wicks made with lead. According to the CPSC, it is impossible to determine which candles have lead-core wicks. Metal wicks, some of which contain lead, should not be used in homes with children. There is a proposed ban on lead-core candle wicks; however proposed legislation would not go into effect until the end of the year. But many retailers are not selling candles with lead-core wicks. Local retailers include Wal-Mart and PartyLite. PartyLite candles can be purchased through independent consultants. Consumers should ask retailers who are not on the list whether candles in their stores are lead-free. If you do not want to throw away all of your candles with metal wicks, you may want to consider discarding the metal wicks, and purchasing a candle warmer. Please be certain not to leave the candle warmer unattended, just as you wouldn't leave a lighted candle unattended.

If you have questions about lead hazards in the home or about recycling, please contact me at 989-773-9631 or [recycling@isabellacounty.org](mailto:recycling@isabellacounty.org), or visit our web site at [www.isabellacounty.org/recycles](http://www.isabellacounty.org/recycles). Happy Recycling!

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