

March 1, 2016

Drinking Water Tests Identified Elevated Lead Levels – Ordway Elementary School

Actions Requested

- **Be aware that parents received a letter from the Bainbridge Island School District** informing them of water testing and actions taken.
- **Expect and be prepared for calls from parents.**
- **Know that at this point, it is challenging to make recommendations** because we do not yet understand the extent of potential exposure. Current Washington Department of Health testing recommendations include testing if children have:
 - Signs or symptoms of lead exposure;
 - Other risk factors (see attached algorithm) for lead poisoning such as living in or regularly visiting a home built before 1978;
 - A parent who works professionally or recreationally with lead;
 - Special vulnerabilities such as poor nutritional intake; or
 - Other environmental exposures to lead in their homes;Please consider testing, per your clinical judgement, if parents are concerned. Our recommendations are subject to change as additional information is obtained.
- **Refer to the attached algorithm for assessing risk factors** of lead exposure.

For questions, healthcare providers may contact our Health Officer, Dr. Susan Turner, at 360-337-5250.

Background

Yesterday, the Bainbridge Island School District (BISD) notified parents about slightly elevated lead levels detected from water fixtures at Ordway Elementary School. BISD has taken the fixtures out of service to mitigate the problem, and will be replacing old fixtures with new lead-free fixtures. They are now providing bottled water for students and staff during the investigation and corrective action process. The school district will be implementing a sampling regime to test the water until the issue is resolved.

At this point, it is not possible to determine the level of risk. We were informed by BISD that two-thirds of the fixtures tested were below the corrective action level for schools of 20 parts per billion (ppb). Elevated lead levels at or above the action level were detected in 23 fixtures, with results ranging from 20 ppb to 384 ppb. The median of these elevated results was 53 ppb. We are working with the Department of Health and the school district to gather more information about the locations of the water fixtures that tested positive and to perform additional water testing. As we learn more, we may update our recommendations for testing children and promise to keep you informed.

Resources

Attachments: (1) Washington State Department of Health's 'Clinical Algorithm for Targeted Childhood Lead Testing' for assessing risk factors of lead exposure

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BLOOD LEAD TESTING OF CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE

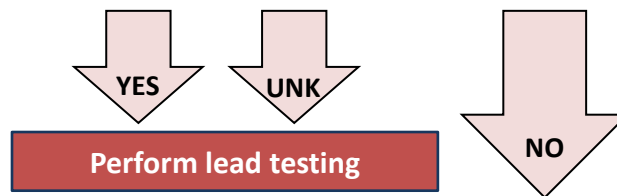
The Department of Health recommends screening children using the below algorithm at 12 and 24 months of age.

Does the child have any of the following risk factors:

- Lives in or regularly visits any house built before 1950.*
- Lives in or regularly visits any house built before 1978 that has recent or ongoing renovations or remodeling.
- From a low income family (defined as incomes <130% of the poverty level.)**
- Known to have a sibling or frequent playmate with elevated blood lead level.
- Is a recent immigrant, refugee, foreign adoptee, or child in foster care.
- Has a parent or principal caregiver who works professionally or recreationally with lead. (See sidebar for examples.)
- Uses traditional, folk, or ethnic remedies or cosmetics (such as Greta, Azarcon, Ghasard, Ba-baw-san, Sindoor or Kohl.)

* Screening may not be indicated if the home has previously undergone lead abatement or tested negative for lead after remodeling.

** Apple Health in Washington Medicaid covers children with family incomes up to 300% of the federal poverty level. If family income is unknown, testing should be offered.



Healthcare providers should consider testing child per clinical judgment, if:

- Parents have concern or request testing (including older children that have risk of exposure.)
- Child lives within a kilometer of an airport or lead emitting industry or on former orchard land.
- Child with pica behavior.
- Child with neurodevelopmental disabilities or conditions such as autism, ADHD, and learning delays.

LEAD RISK EXPOSURE EXAMPLES:

Occupations and Hobbies:

- Remodeling and demolition
- Painting
- Work or visit gun range
- Mining, smelting, battery recycling
- Making lead fishing weights or ammunition
- Stained glass
- Soldering and welding

Consumer Products:

- Pottery or porcelain with lead glaze
- Informally imported foods, candies and spices
- Antique furniture and inexpensive jewelry

Healthcare providers are encouraged to use the [Department of Health's Lead Risk Index Map](#) to better understand which areas in their community are at higher risk for lead exposure. See <https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/wtn/WTNIBL/>

Interpretation and Medical Management of Blood Lead Levels:

If blood lead level is ≥ 5 mcg/dL: See [PEHSU Recommendations on Medical Management of Childhood Lead Poisoning](#)