



HAS YOUR CHILD BEEN TESTED FOR LEAD PRIOR TO ENTERING KINDERGARTEN?

The State of Iowa requires all children entering kindergarten to have at least one blood lead test before the child is 6 years of age. Lead poisoning continues to be a serious problem in Iowa, with lead-based paint being the main source of poisoning to children. Lead is commonly found in the paint of homes built before 1978 and, less commonly in other sources, like spices, ceremonial make-up, home remedies and water.



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), studies have shown that a small exposure to lead is enough to reduce children's capacity to do well in school. The only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is to have them tested. At a minimum, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) recommends children be tested for lead at 1 and 2 years of age. Your provider may recommend additional testing if risk factors for lead exist.

Why does my child need a blood lead test?

Since 2008, Iowa law has required all children to have a lead test before they turn 6 years old and enter school. Blood lead testing promotes early detection and referral for treatment of lead poisoning; informs parents and guardians about their children's exposure to lead; and promotes the importance of living in a lead safe environment.

Who pays for the testing?

Most private insurers and public insurance plans, like Medicaid and Hawki cover the cost of a blood lead test. If you do not have a way to pay for the test, contact your local health department or IDPH at (800) 972-2026.

What if I don't remember if my child had a blood lead test?

Call your child's medical provider and ask them to check if a blood lead test for your child is in the medical chart. If it is, request a copy of the blood lead test results and bring it to your child's school. If your provider does not have a record of testing, schedule a date to have your child tested.

What information do I need to provide to the clinic or lab?

Provide the same name and date of birth that you will report or already reported at your child's school. If you submit your child's information different at the clinic or school, it is likely that IDPH will not be able to determine that your child had a blood lead test, and will ask for a test later on.

In addition, ask your clinic or lab if they send blood-lead test results to IDPH. If they are not familiar with the procedure, please provide them with the department's phone number: (800) 972-2026. This way, IDPH will not miss your child's test results, and will not request another.

What do I do with my child's blood lead test results?

If your child was tested in Iowa at a medical provider's office, clinic, or lab, their results will be reported to IDPH. If your child was tested in another state, you will need to obtain a copy of his or her results and give it to your child's school to submit to IDPH.

Is my child's blood lead testing information secure?

Yes, only authorized people have access to your child's information. The Iowa Department of Public Health stores blood lead testing information in a secure database.

What if I do not want my child have a blood lead test?

The Iowa Department of Public Health grants two types of exemptions to those who meet the criteria for a Religious and Low Risk Exemption.

1. The religious exemption is for kindergartners whose parents/guardians believe a blood lead test conflicts with their genuine and sincere religious belief.
2. The low risk exemption is for kindergartners who meet certain criteria regarding, among others, place of residence, parents'/guardians' occupation, child's mouthing habits and travel outside of the U.S.

To learn more about these exemptions, visit the IDPH website at www.idph.iowa.gov and type the word "exemption" in the search box. Then select the appropriate link.

Otherwise, call IDPH at (800) 972-2026 or at (515) 281-3225. If Deaf Relay (Hearing or Speech Impaired), call 711 (800)-735-2942