



**WHAT YOUR  
CHILD'S  
CAPILLARY  
BLOOD LEAD  
LEVEL MEANS**

# HOW DO BLOOD LEAD TESTS WORK?

There are two types of blood lead tests used to see if your child has lead poisoning: capillary and venous. A capillary blood lead test is used as a screening tool to tell if your child has been exposed to lead in the past 3-4 months. A small amount of blood is taken from the capillaries close to the skin in your child's arm, finger or heel to find out how much lead they have in their blood. If this level is high, a venous test is recommended since it's more accurate than a capillary test.

## WHY DOES MY CHILD NEED TO BE TESTED FOR LEAD?

Lead is highly toxic and can cause developmental delays, learning difficulties, headaches and more. Children exposed to lead may not look sick, so it is important that kids – especially toddlers – get tested at least once a year before they turn six.

## YOUR CHILD'S CAPILLARY RESULTS

\_\_\_\_\_ has a capillary blood lead level of

<Child's name>

\_\_\_\_\_ micrograms per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ )

<Number>

## FOR A CAPILLARY BLOOD LEVEL LESS THAN 10 µg/dL

If your child's blood lead level is 5-9 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL), you'll want to ask your doctor for materials about lead poisoning, how to look for lead hazards around your home or where your child spends time, and the importance of good nutrition and housekeeping. Your child should have a repeat lead test in 6-12 months or as recommended by your medical provider.

Your child should be tested by the following date: \_\_\_\_\_

## FOR A CAPILLARY BLOOD LEVEL OF 10 µg/dL OR HIGHER

Your child needs a venous blood lead test to confirm the capillary result. See below for when your child needs this test.

- WITHIN 3 MONTHS** for a capillary test between 10-14 µg/dL
- WITHIN 1 MONTH** for a capillary test between 15-19 µg/dL
- WITHIN 1 WEEK** for a capillary test between 20-44 µg/dL
- WITHIN 48 HOURS** for a capillary test between 45-69 µg/dL
- IMMEDIATELY** for a capillary test of 70 µg/dL or higher

Your child should be tested by the following date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Be sure to get your child retested by the recommended date!**





# KEEP YOUR KIDS HEALTHY!

→ **KEEP TESTING THEM FOR LEAD.**

**Regular blood testing helps doctors and families discover lead poisoning so future exposure can be stopped. Test your child once a year, every year to keep them healthy!**

**IDPH**  
IOWA Department  
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Visit the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program page at [idph.iowa.gov](http://idph.iowa.gov) or call 1-800-972-2026 for more information about preventing childhood lead poisoning.

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