

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

Celeste Phillip, MD, MPH
State Surgeon General

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

November 2, 2016

Dear Health Care Partners:

Local press has recently been reporting on the results of tests for lead in the drinking water in several schools in Leon County. With lead in the news, we have a “teachable moment” to increase the awareness of parents and others regarding sources of lead in our environment. Common sources include lead-based paint in homes built prior to 1978, soil near roadways or other sources of lead, take-home exposures related to adult occupations, imported spices, cosmetics, folk remedies, and cookware.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, water typically contributes to approximately 20% of a child’s blood lead concentration if the water concentration exceeds 5 parts per billion (ppb). Most drinking water samples in the Leon County schools were below the 15 ppb “take action” threshold put forth by the Environmental Protection Agency, but less is better and we support the efforts to reduce levels as much as possible.

Parents may be asking whether or not their children should be tested for lead. The answer depends on the age of the child and an assessment of all potential sources of exposure in his or her environment. No level of lead in the blood is known to be safe. In 2012, the CDC established a new “reference value” for blood lead levels (5 mcg/dL), thereby lowering the level at which evaluation and intervention are recommended. For a map of areas in Leon County with an increased risk of exposure, go to:

http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/lead-poisoning/_images/leon.jpg

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

“Pediatricians and other primary care health providers should conduct targeted screening of children for elevated blood lead concentrations if they are 12 to 24 months of age and live in communities or census block groups with $\geq 25\%$ of housing built before 1960 or a prevalence of children’s blood lead concentrations $\geq 5 \mu\text{g/dL}$ ($\geq 50 \text{ ppb}$) of $\geq 5\%$.”

“Pediatricians and other primary care providers should test children for elevated blood lead concentrations if they live in or visit a home or child care facility with an identified lead hazard or a home built before 1960 that is in poor repair or was renovated in the past 6 months.”

I have enclosed a list of Frequently Asked Questions prepared by the Florida Department of Health. You can access the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on “The Prevention of Childhood Lead Toxicity” at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2016/06/16/peds.2016-1493.full.pdf>

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Medical Director
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