

COUNTY OF KANE



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Kane County Health Department Cautions Residents About Lead in Holiday Cookware and Servingware

(MEDIA RELEASE 12/4/25) As families gather this holiday season to cook and share meals, the Kane County Health Department (KCHD) reminds residents to be aware that some cookware and servingware may contain lead. Lead exposure is especially dangerous for children and can cause developmental delays, learning difficulties, and other serious health effects.

Items such as imported ceramics, brightly colored pottery, and certain metal kitchenware may leach lead into food, particularly when used for acidic dishes like tomato sauce or citrus-based recipes. Chipped or cracked items can increase the risk. The FDA has issued [warnings about certain imported cookware](#) made from aluminum, brass, and specific alloys that may leach lead into food, posing health risks, especially to children and pregnant women.

“During the holidays, many families bring out special dishes and serve meals on festive servingware,” said Michael Isaacson, KCHD Executive Director. “It’s important to ensure these items are safe so holiday celebrations remain joyful and healthy.”

KCHD offers the following guidance to reduce lead exposure:

- Look for “lead-free” or “food safe” markings. Items without labels, especially older or imported pieces, may be higher risk.
- Avoid chipped or cracked items. Be cautious with brightly colored glazes like reds, oranges, yellows, and greens in older ceramics. Some vintage or imported metal cookware may also contain lead.
- Imported, traditional, handmade, or pre-1970s items may contain lead even if they appear safe.
- At-home lead test kits can detect the presence of lead and can be purchased at some hardware stores and online retailers; however, they do not show how much lead is present. Additionally, their reliability in detecting low lead levels has not been determined. If the test indicates lead, do not use the item for food.
- A [certified lead testing lab](#) can give definitive results.
- Avoid using questionable items for acidic foods, and do not let children use potentially leaded dishes. When in doubt, replace items with certified lead-free alternatives.

The KCHD Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program offers guidance for families on reducing lead exposure in the home and ways to lower your child’s lead level if they have tested positive for lead by their physician. For more information about the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, visit: <https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Lead.aspx>

