

Kane County Health Department Promotes Early Lead Testing for Children

The Kane County Health Department (KCHD) is encouraging parents and caregivers to talk to their pediatrician about lead testing at 12 and 24 months of age to help identify lead exposure as early as possible. Early detection is key to protecting children during critical stages of development and connecting families with resources that can prevent lifelong health effects. To help ensure more children receive this important screening, Illinois now requires blood lead testing for all children at 12 and 24 months of age.

Effective July 1, 2026, Illinois expanded its lead screening requirements to better protect children across the state. Previously, blood lead testing was required only for children living in designated high-risk ZIP codes. Under the new law, all children in Illinois must receive blood lead testing at 12 and 24 months of age, regardless of where they live. In addition, children age 6 and younger must be assessed for lead exposure risk during routine health care visits using a standardized questionnaire.

"There is no safe level of lead exposure for children, and even low levels can affect a child's health and development," said Michael Isaacson, KCHD Executive Director. "Blood lead testing helps identify exposure early, allowing families to receive the support and resources they need to reduce further exposure and improve long-term health outcomes."

Lead exposure can damage the brain and nervous system and may cause developmental delays, behavioral problems, learning difficulties, slowed growth, and hearing or speech problems. Because many children with elevated blood lead levels show no obvious symptoms, testing is the only way to know if a child has been exposed.

Under Illinois law, children with confirmed blood lead levels of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) or higher receive a public health response. This may include a visit to the home by KCHD lead specialists to identify potential sources of lead exposure and provide education on ways to reduce and prevent further exposure.

KCHD's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program works with families to identify lead hazards, provide education, and connect residents with resources to create safer home environments.

To learn more about lead poisoning prevention go to KCHD's [Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Lead.aspx) (https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Lead.aspx), or to find a healthcare provider who offers blood lead testing, visit KCHD's Lead Prevention webpage or the [Community Resources page](https://www.kanehealth.com/pages/community-organizations.aspx?FilterField1=Category&FilterValue1=Medical) (https://www.kanehealth.com/pages/community-organizations.aspx?FilterField1=Category&FilterValue1=Medical), or contact the department's [Information and Referral Specialist](https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Case-Management.aspx) (https://www.kanehealth.com/Pages/Case-Management.aspx.)

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