



Jeb Bush
Governor

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Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Highlights the Importance of Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning

Every year, approximately 310,000 children across the U.S. are lead poisoned. **In Pinellas County, an estimated 1,191 children may be at risk from exposure to lead hazards in their homes.**

To help eliminate lead poisoning, the Pinellas County Health Department will hold a series of events during **National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 23-29**. Events will include informational sessions on prevention efforts, workshops for property owners, health fairs for parents and free blood lead tests for young children at health department centers throughout Pinellas County.

The most common way children are lead poisoned is from exposure to lead paint, which is commonly found in homes built before 1978. Disturbing the lead paint allows lead-contaminated dust to settle on toys, windowsills and floors. Children can then easily swallow bits of lead-contaminated dust and paint chips. Children may also be exposed to lead through certain vinyl mini blinds, unsafe renovation work involving dry sanding, power washing or high temperature heat guns, unsafe consumer products (e.g. certain jewelry, sidewalk chalk, lunch boxes), certain home remedies (e.g., arzacon and greta) and certain imported candies.

Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body. Lead poisoning often occurs with no obvious symptoms. Lead can damage the brain, kidneys and nervous system, and cause anemia, hearing loss, and decreased growth. Lead poisoning can affect a child's ability to learn, and cause behavior problems, poor school performance, speech and language delays, and decreased scores on standardized math and reading tests such as the FCAT. The only way to test for lead poisoning is by asking your child's health care provider for a blood lead test. Children less than six years of age should be tested if they live in a home built before 1978, or if they could be exposed to lead hazards.



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The Pinellas County Health Department's Lead Intervention and Healthy Homes Team offers information to help you and your family stay informed about the childhood lead poisoning prevention and healthy homes efforts in your area and ways to prevent lead poisoning among young children.

Childhood lead poisoning remains a major environmental health problem in the United States, and it is entirely preventable. Do your part by preventing children's exposure to lead hazards among your family and your community. Learn more about lead safe work practices and keeping you home healthy and safe by visiting our web site at: [http:// www.pinellashealth.com/familyhealth/lead.asp](http://www.pinellashealth.com/familyhealth/lead.asp). Together we can put the lid on lead!

For more information on the childhood lead poisoning prevention or National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week activities in your area call Melanie Thoenes at (727) 824-6927. For additional information about lead poisoning or testing your home for lead hazards, contact the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323), or visit www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com