



JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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Jefferson County Public Health Service Observes National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 20-24, 2024

Watertown, NY~ Jefferson County Public Health Service (JCPHS) is pleased to recognize National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 20-26, 2024. JCPHS will participate in outreach and educational activities designed to raise local awareness about the danger of lead exposure and poisoning, educate parents and communities on how to reduce exposure to lead in the environment, prevent its serious health effects, and learn about the importance of testing children for lead.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Outreach activities and events for the weeklong observance include:

- *Happy, Healthy, Lead-Free Me* StoryWalk®– available throughout the week and is self-guided, located at the playground at Thompson Park in Watertown.
- Free webinars offered by the EPA, that include: “**Know Your Rights! An Overview of Federal Lead-based Paint Regulations**”, “**Understanding Lead**”, and “**Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule Awareness**”. Visit: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/national-lead-poisoning-prevention-week> to register for any of the EPA’s free webinars.
- Free testing of toys and small household items at Jefferson County Public Health on Thursday Oct. 24 from 10am-4pm. This testing event is open to the public and no appointment is necessary. Along with testing, participants will receive risk reduction education and a bag of wet cleaning supplies to help reduce lead dust in the home.

Lead can be found inside and outside the home, including in the water that travels through lead pipes or in the soil around the house. However, the most common source of exposure for children is from lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. Jefferson County has a large percentage of older housing stock. Approximately 75% of homes in Jefferson County were built prior to the ban on lead-based paint and as a result, may contain lead hazards.

Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in lead dust (especially during activities such as renovations, repairs, or painting) or by swallowing lead dust that settles in food, food preparation surfaces, floors, windowsills, eating paint chips, soil that contains lead, or other places. Children can also become exposed to lead dust from adults’ jobs or hobbies and from some metal toys or toys painted with lead-based paint.

Most children have had some contact with lead in old paint, soil, plumbing, or another source. This is why New York State requires health care providers to test all children with a blood lead test at age 1 year and again at age 2 years. Children’s blood lead levels tend to increase from 6 to 12 months of age and tend to peak at 18 to 24 months of age.

The problem is largely preventable with increased testing, education, and a focus on prevention. Stakeholders can use the EPA Toolkit at: <https://www.epa.gov/lead/national-lead-poisoning-prevention-week>, to assist with building awareness and implementation at the local level.

For more information on how to protect your family from lead, please visit www.jcphs.org.