



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Reduce exposure to lead, especially among young children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program is committed to eliminating the risk of childhood lead poisoning in the state of Alabama, and the week of Oct. 19-25 is designated as National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to remind the public of the dangers this toxic substance poses for children.

“Lead poisoning can damage the central and peripheral nervous systems, the kidneys and the body’s ability to regulate vitamin D which is essential for promoting calcium absorption,” said Jacqueline Harris, program director with the Alabama Department of Public Health. “Lead remains an important public health problem despite the elimination of lead from gasoline and house paint. Young children and the developing fetus particularly are at risk.

The primary sources of lead exposure among U.S. children are lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust and soil found in and around old, deteriorating buildings. Today, childhood lead poisoning is considered to be the most preventable environmental disease of young children, yet an estimated 310,000 U.S. children have elevated blood lead levels. A simple blood test can prevent a lifetime flawed by the irreversible damage caused by lead poisoning.

While the national goal of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in the United States by 2010, the goals of the Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week are to effectively address childhood lead poisoning. These include:

- Raising awareness about this serious health issue;
- Emphasizing the importance of screening the highest risk children younger than 6 years of age, preferably screening them by 1 to 2 years of age;
- Highlighting existing childhood lead poisoning prevention partnering efforts and to increase the establishment of new efforts; and
- Urging people to take steps to reduce their possible exposure to lead.

For additional information on lead poisoning please call the Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-800-654-1385 or visit www.adph.org/aclppp.

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