



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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January 9, 2018

Contact: Ryan Scarpino
Public Health Information Officer
412-578-8312 (office)
412-339-7995 (cell)
Ryan.Scarpino@AlleghenyCounty.us

Health Department to Offer Free Lead Testing for Children

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) will be offering free blood lead level testing for uninsured and underinsured children in Allegheny County, starting on Thursday, January 11, 2018.

Testing will be done at ACHD's Immunization Clinic on Tuesday (9 a.m.-12 p.m.) and on Thursday (12-4 p.m.) of each week. No advance appointment is necessary. The clinic is located on the fourth floor of the Hartley Rose Building (425 First Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15219), but patrons are advised to enter the building via Cherry Way.

"To support the new universal lead screening regulation in Allegheny County, we are pleased to announce our new lead testing services for uninsured and underinsured children," said Dr. Karen Hacker, ACHD Director. "In Allegheny County, children can be exposed to lead from multiple sources including paint, dust, soil and water. Blood lead testing is an important strategy to identify children who have been exposed and intervene"

Blood lead level tests at the Immunization Clinic will be done via a capillary screen or what is commonly referred to as a "finger stick." Parents and/or guardians should call the Health Department at 412-687-ACHD (412-687-2243) to find out if they qualify for these services.

Children with elevated test results from the capillary screen will be referred to their primary care provider to have a required confirmatory blood draw (a venous test) at another location as prescribed by the child's healthcare provider.

The Health Department is also developing plans to provide lead testing later this year at its WIC offices in McKeesport and Wilkinsburg. Details on those locations will be made available as soon as possible.

ACHD is reminding parents and providers of the regulation requiring all children in the county, unless otherwise exempted, to have their blood lead levels tested, went into effect on January 1, 2018. The regulation, which applies to all residents and schools of Allegheny County, is meant to boost early detection and treatment of lead poisoning and reduce the incidence, impact, and cost of the problem. It also will enhance countywide surveillance of childhood lead poisoning.

For more information about ACHD's approach to preventing lead exposure, visit <http://achd.net/lead/>, and for a comprehensive Q&A about the new universal blood lead level testing regulation, visit <http://www.achd.net/legal/pub/pdf/Article-XXIII-FAQ.pdf>.

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Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, Director
Allegheny County Health Department – Public Information Office
542 Fourth Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-687-ACHD (2243) | Fax: 412-578-8325 | www.achd.net

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