



EL PASO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

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FACT SHEET ON BLOOD LEAD LEVEL TESTING FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS IN EL PASO COUNTY

Summary:

Blood lead levels (BLLs) are a reportable condition in Colorado—including BLLs >25ug/dl in patients 18 years and older, and **all** BLLs in individuals under the age of 18. Please refer to the Colorado Department of Health and Environment’s (CDPHE) website for a complete listing of lab-notifiable conditions and reporting protocols: www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/Lablist.pdf.

The CDPHE, in coordination with the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment and the Community Lead Coalition, recently completed a comprehensive analysis of lead testing activity in El Paso County, representing 14 years of clinical data (1994-2008) and nearly 10,000 associated records. The focus of the analysis was on children 2 years of age or younger, who are most at risk for lead infections resulting in health complications—including kidney and brain damage, learning disabilities and delayed speech.

Key Findings of Analysis for El Paso County:

- Sixty-eight percent of the 102 cases with elevated blood lead levels (≥ 10 ug/dl) did not have evidence of a repeat test, as recommended by the CDC and CDPHE.
- Only about 56% of reported BLL tests were conducted on children 2 years of age or younger.
- We estimated that less than 2% of children 2 years of age or younger had a BLL reported annually.
- Only 10 local providers accounted for 84% of BLL tests reported with a physician address.
- About 75% of all BLLs reported had a level ≤ 2 ug/dl. The median BLL in children 2 years of age or younger was 3.0 ug/dl.
- The 6 El Paso County zip codes meeting the American Academy of Pediatrics definition of “at risk” for lead exposures based on their homes’ construction dates¹ (2000 U.S. Census) were: 80832, 80833, 80835, 80903, 80904 and 80905.

Call to Action:

Based on this analysis, the El Paso County Department of Health and Environment and Community Lead Coalition strongly encourage local health care providers to:

1. Routinely screen children 2 years of age or younger for BLL—especially those residing in the aforementioned zip code areas and children who are on Medicaid.
2. Pursue appropriate follow up as identified in the chart below.
3. Educate parents about possible environmental risks for lead exposure and good nutrition habits that can help prevent lead absorption in children’s bodies.

CDPHE Childhood Blood Lead Retesting and Case Management Chart²

Blood Lead Level (ug/dl)	Retesting Schedule	Family Education Follow-up	Child Medical Follow-up	Environmental Follow-up and Home Investigation
10-20	Within 1-3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lead education and exposure prevention guidance •Nutrition evaluation. Coordinate with WIC if eligible. •Referral to early enrichment programs if at-risk for developmental/behavioral deficits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ensure adequate nutritional intake, especially calcium, iron and vitamin C •Test all siblings under age 6 •Treat as elevated level if persistent or increasing BLL in the range of 15-19 ug/dl 	Should be performed if child has persistent BLLs in the range of 15-19 ug/dl (e.g., 2 venous test results in this range within 3 months)

¹ Note: Prior to 1950, lead-based paints were commonly used on home exteriors and interiors. Older homes also are more prone to outdated, eroded plumbing systems and properties contaminated with lead.

² The full CDPHE BLL management chart is posted on our website at: www.elpasocountyhealth.org/pages/Hans.aspx