



# Summit County Public Health

1867 West Market Street ♦ Akron, Ohio 44313-6901  
Phone: (330) 923-4891 ♦ Toll-free: 1 (877) 687-0002 ♦ Fax: (330) 923-7558  
[www.scphoh.org](http://www.scphoh.org)

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Media Contact: Renee Dell, R.S., LRA  
(330) 926-5631  
[rdell@schd.org](mailto:rdell@schd.org)

### **National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week October 22-28, 2017** **Lead is Still the #1 Environmental Threat to Children Where They Live and Play**

AKRON, Ohio – Lead, a toxic metal, is still present where children live and play in Summit County. Lead poisoning is still being diagnosed because lead is a metal that never breaks down. While lead was banned in paint and gasoline in the 1970's, homes with flaking lead paint and lead-contaminated soil are found throughout the county.

To raise awareness of the consequences of lead poisoning among parents, grandparents, and pregnant women who live in homes built before 1978, Summit County Public Health (SCPH) is promoting National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW) October 22-28, 2017. SCPH takes this opportunity to invite homeowners and landlords of pre-1978 homes to get a free lead-safe home consultation and screening for the county-wide, US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Lead-Based Paint Hazard Control Grant at (330) 926-5600.

SCPH investigators find lead at pre-1978 homes that have painted wood siding, painted front porches, and original painted windows and doors. It has also been found in dust on the floor by painted windows and doors and in the bare dirt outside houses. When lead paint cracks or flakes, it drops chips on the floor which get crushed creating dust that is carried around the house on shoes. Children can touch lead dust when they crawl on the floor or put their hands and toys in their mouths. The ingested lead then moves to the blood causing elevated blood lead levels.

Children may not look or act sick, but lead hurts the brain and other parts of the nervous system. Some health problems caused may never go away becoming lifetime problems. Elevated blood lead levels can cause speech delays, hearing loss, increased aggression, lack of impulse control, hyperactivity, an inability to focus, inattention, and delinquent behaviors. Yearly blood tests, until a child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday, are the only way to know if lead is in their blood. Testing is recommended if a child lives in or visits a house built before 1978.

The US Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) recommends public health intervention for children under the age of 6 with a venous blood lead test result of 5 mcg/dL or greater. SCPH is assigned cases by ODH and investigates to find the lead source while providing instructions to prevent further exposure.

Lead poisoning is 100% preventable. The CDC states that no level of lead in children is safe. For kids to grow up lead-free, prevention steps need to be followed. First, find out if your house, built before 1978, has lead paint. Then, have children wash their hands after playing outside, before eating, and before naps and bedtime. Wash toys, baby bottles and pacifiers that fall on the floor. Keep infants off the floor in rooms with entry doors where lead dust can be tracked in from porches with flaking paint. Prevent children from playing in bare dirt. Avoid tracking dirt into the house by taking shoes off at the door. Vacuum and damp mop floors, and damp dust old, painted windows.

To learn more about making your home lead safe go to [www.scpoh.org](http://www.scpoh.org), or contact Renee Dell at (330) 926-5631 or email [rdell@schd.org](mailto:rdell@schd.org).



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