

ANDREW J. SPANO, Westchester County Executive  
JOSHUA LIPSMAN, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health  
SUSAN TOLCHIN, Director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT WORKS  
TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING  
National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Observed**

October 22 – October 28 is National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week and the Westchester County Department of Health is encouraging parents and guardians to take precautions to prevent lead poisoning in their children.

“Lead poisoning is a serious illness that affects thousands of children each year and can cause a wide variety of severe health problems,” stated Joshua Lipsman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Commissioner of Health for Westchester County. “At low blood lead levels, lead can adversely affect a child's ability to learn. At high levels, lead is an acute poison that can require hospitalization for treatment. Lead poisoning can cause mental retardation, seizures and in severe cases, death,” Dr. Lipsman warned.

The Health Department’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (CLPPP) works to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning in Westchester’s children. The CLPPP educates parents and providers about the dangers and symptoms of lead poisoning; conducts investigations and interventions to discover and eliminate the sources of lead found in the home or other locations of lead poisoned children; and maintains a lead poisoning registry to track lead poisoned children in Westchester County. For more information about the CLPPP, contact the Health Department at (914) 813-5000.

Additionally, The Westchester County Department of Planning has recently been awarded \$5 million dollars in funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the clean up of lead in houses, particularly lead-based paint. If you have chipping and peeling paint in your home, contact the Westchester County Department of Planning for information about this program at 914-995-2433.

Parents and caregivers should be aware that lead poisoning is preventable and that there are several ways to minimize a child’s exposure to lead.

- Lead Poisoning can be easily detected by a simple blood test. All children between the ages of six months and six

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years old should be assessed annually by their pediatrician and all children at ages one and two years should be tested for lead exposure.

- Eating chipping and peeling lead based paint is the most common way a child is exposed to lead. Parents should clean up peeling paint and paint chips frequently using wet methods (mop, sponge, or cloth) and an all purpose degreasing cleaner.
- House cleaning should be done by wet mopping and damp dusting to avoid putting lead dust in the air which children can inhale.
- Children's hands should be washed frequently, particularly before meals and snacks and after playing outdoors.
- Small children should be closely supervised to know what they are putting in their mouths. Many young children have a habit of eating things other than food.
- Children should be fed a well balanced diet that is high in calcium and iron which can help in minimizing their exposure to lead. Foods such as cheese, yogurt, beans and dark leafy green vegetables are good sources of calcium and iron.
- Use pottery only for display if you are unsure about the content of lead in the glaze.

Lead in drinking water is rarely a significant source of lead poisoning. However, if you are unsure about the level of lead in your drinking water, be sure to use only water from the cold water tap for cooking and drinking or making a baby's formula. Hot water picks up more lead from pipes and solder. In addition, if more than six hours have gone by since a tap was last turned on, run the water until it becomes noticeably cooler to the touch before using it for cooking or drinking.

To learn how to properly remove sources of lead from your home or, if you suspect that there might be dangerous lead levels in your water, call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914) 813-5000 or visit the department's website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).