

News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Connecticut Department of Public Health

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Department of Public Health Recognizes Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 19 –25

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health is reminding homeowners to use lead-safe practices when renovating a home built before 1978 as lead poisoning continues to be a concern for Connecticut and the nation. In 2007, more than 1,000 Connecticut under the age of 6 had elevated levels of lead in their blood.

To underscore the need for lead poisoning awareness, DPH is highlighting National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 19-25. This year's theme is: "Let's Wipe Out Lead Poisoning–Renovate Right!"

“Lead poisoning can have devastating effects on a child including irreversible damage to the brain and nervous system, behavioral and learning problems, and hearing loss,” warned DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, MD, MPH, MBA. “Lead poisoning is preventable and I urge all parents to take steps to identify and control any lead hazard in their child’s environment.”

Lead is a highly toxic metal that at one time was an ingredient in many household products, including lead-based paints manufactured before 1978. The primary source of lead exposure among U.S. children is the lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust and soil found in and around old, deteriorating buildings.

Lead can also be found in toys and products. In 2007, 111 recalls were issued for toys and products by the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), due to lead hazards. So far this year, 60 lead-related recalls have been issued by the CPSC for lead hazards.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projects that every year over 240,000 children across the United States are poisoned by lead

Lead poisoning is frequently unrecognized because it often occurs with no obvious symptoms. A blood lead test is the only way to know whether a person has been poisoned with lead. On January 1, 2009, medical primary care providers (PCPs) will be required to perform annual blood lead screening of all children less than three years of age and to screen any child between the ages of 36 and 72 months who has not been previously screened.

The goals of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week are:

- To raise awareness about this serious health issue;
- To emphasize the importance of screening children younger than six years of age;
- To urge people to take steps to reduce possible exposure to lead.

Activities planned for the week include free blood lead screening, community lead-awareness events, and outreach/educational campaigns will be conducted throughout Connecticut and the nation. The following is a listing of some of the activities scheduled in Connecticut for NLPPW:

Hartford:

- Monday, October 20th is the Lead Awareness Kickoff at the City Hall Atrium on Main Street from 9:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. and is open to the public.
- Tuesday, October 21st the City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department will have free lead screenings and education from 9:00-1:00 p.m. at 131 Coventry Street in Hartford and from 3:30-6:30 p.m. at the Southside Community Center.
- Wednesday, October 22nd the City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department will have free lead screenings and education at the farmers market from 10:00-1:00 p.m. at 80 Coventry Street.
- Thursday, October 23rd at the Pope Park Recreation Center the Office of Young Children Lead Poisoning Prevention will hold a celebration. Music provided by Radio Disney, lead screenings, education, and fun activities will be provided.
- Friday, October 24th at Burgdorf Building Lobby at 131 Coventry Street there will be the Grand Finale Celebration for National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week from 10:00-1:00 p.m. The City of Hartford Health and Human Services Department will be providing health education materials, lead screenings, activities, giveaways, and refreshments.

New Haven:

- On Saturday, October 25th the Yale Lead Program and Regional Treatment Center will have their annual Lead Program Harvest Festival which is held next to their office and includes music, lead program materials, pumpkin decorating for the children, and face painting in celebration of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week.

Waterbury:

- The Waterbury Health Department and the Department of Public Health are holding a coloring contest at the Walsh Elementary School in Waterbury on Tuesday, October 21, 2008 for all Kindergarten and First Grade classrooms. An educational and fun in-service will be given to the entire school after their morning assembly. Students will have until Friday, October 24th to finish their contest submission. The winning entries will be made into a 2009 calendar and will be distributed for every child, teacher, and faculty that participated in the event

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Contact the DPH Lead Poisoning Prevention and Control Program at 860-509-7299 or your local health department for information about other NLPPW activities throughout the state. More information about the prevention of childhood lead poisoning is available at www.ct.gov/dph. For information on recalled toys and products, please go to www.recalls.gov.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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