

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **You Can Help Protect Kids from Lead Poisoning**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is working to reduce childhood exposure to lead by increasing lead poisoning prevention awareness in our communities. Childhood exposure to lead can have serious health effects that may include damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, hearing problems, and speech disabilities.

Healthcare providers and parents play a key role in preventing lead poisoning by identifying children at risk for exposure and testing their blood lead levels. Here are some things to look for at home to help protect children from lead:

- Was the home built before 1978? Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. Lead from paint, paint chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards, particularly to children and pregnant people.
- Has the water been tested for lead? The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures.
- Are renovations, repairs, or repainting stirring up lead dust? Lead dust can be breathed in or can settle on food, food preparation surfaces, floors, windowsills, and other places.
- Do children wash their hands after playing outside? Soil can contain lead, and small children may need help washing their hands thoroughly.
- Is lead being brought into the home on work clothes, shoes, or hair? Some jobs involve working with lead such as galvanizers, painters, auto repair workers, and plumbers.

There are several tests available for water, paint, and other sources to find out if your home contains lead. The Environmental Protection Agency website [epa.gov](http://epa.gov) has resources to find testing or a certified risk assessor. You can also call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223 or the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).

“More than half of homes in southwest Nebraska were built in 1978 or earlier, and children are still being exposed to lead,” states Melissa Propp, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “There are often no obvious symptoms, which makes lead testing very important. Children between the ages of one through five years old should have a blood lead test. If their lead level is higher than recommended, a quick survey of your home can help identify possible sources of lead exposure.”

For more information including a complete list of potential sources, visit [cdc.gov/lead](http://cdc.gov/lead). Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

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