



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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### **ADPH continues to address lead levels in children**

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has been working with the medical community to evaluate blood lead levels in children for decades. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that children be screened for lead at 12 and 24 months. However, lead testing as part of health screenings is at the discretion of the doctor.

In Alabama, physicians are required to report blood lead levels of 10 micrograms per deciliter or more within four days. Such levels are concerning for potential lead poisoning. Upon receiving a report, the ADPH makes timely referrals for care coordination and an environmental-based home investigation to determine possible sources of lead exposure.

Although lower, blood lead levels of 5 to 9 micrograms per deciliter are still concerning. It is recommended that physicians also report these, and if the physician is concerned about lead exposure, he or she can request care coordination services and an environmental-based home investigation.

Acting State Health Officer Dr. Tom Miller said, "We are continuing to work with health care providers to ensure children with elevated blood lead levels are identified and appropriately addressed."

The vast majority of blood lead tests on children are negative.

The primary sources of lead poisoning in Alabama are lead-based paint manufactured before 1950, mini blinds, occupational lead hazards, hobbies and some toys. Public water systems are required to test water quality monthly with results sent to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

Recently, there have been reports that statistical data depict high lead levels in children in Dallas and Houston counties. ADPH has reviewed this information and has determined that it does not provide a true picture regarding lead levels in either county. Specifically, the data reflect the number of tests reported from these counties and not a percentage of all children in these counties with elevated lead levels.

Dr. Miller stated, "At present, there is no heightened level of concern regarding elevated lead levels in either county."

For more information, visit the Alabama Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at <http://www.adph.org/aclppp/>

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