

# Testing your Child for Lead

What to Expect at the Doctor's Visit

Lead Tipsheet #1



November 2019



## A blood lead test is the only way to know if your child has lead poisoning.

Toddlers at ages 1 and 2 are more likely to be poisoned by lead. Young children can get lead dust or lead paint chips into their bodies because they often put their hands, toys or other things in their mouths. They also play where lead dust may be – like on floors and near window sills.

Lead was used in paint. Paint bought today does not have lead in it. Older houses often still have lead paint in them. Dust from old paint is the most common way children get lead poisoning.

### Test your child for lead at ages 1 and 2.

Maine requires all children be tested for lead at 1 and 2 years of age. Talk with your doctor about a blood lead test for your child.

### Children who are 3 to 6 years old may also need a blood lead test.

Parents can ask their doctor to test their children for lead. Consider a blood lead test if any of the following apply to you and your family.

- My child has never been tested.
- The place where I live was built before 1950.
- The place where I live was built before 1978, and there have been recent repairs to my home.
- Someone who lives with me may work with lead. Examples: house painters, contractors, metal recyclers.
- My child has a brother, sister or neighbor who has had lead poisoning.
- My child or I were born in another country.
- My child often swallows things that aren't food, or chews on window sills.

### How is a blood lead test done?

A child's blood test can be either a finger or toe prick (capillary test) or by drawing blood from a vein (venous test).



Venous (Arm) Test



Capillary (Finger) Test

Some blood lead tests are done right in the doctor's office. Other doctors may give you a lab slip to have the blood test done at a lab. Bring this slip to the lab when your child goes for the lead test.

### What to do after a blood lead test?

Ask your doctor for the results. If a capillary test is high, your child will need a venous test because it is more exact. If a venous test is high, the Maine Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Unit will work with you to find out what caused the high level of lead in your child's blood. Follow-up blood lead tests will be needed to make sure your child's lead level is going down.

### Protect your family.

- Check this website: [maine.gov/healthyhomes](http://maine.gov/healthyhomes)
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474** • TTY: **Call Maine Relay 711**

