



Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Faith Lustik
Health Planner 786-3723

Free Lead Poisoning Screening at Public Health

October 20, 2015, Watertown, NY– Nearly half a million children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels that may cause significant damage to their health, estimates the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Major sources of lead exposure to U.S. children include lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust in deteriorating buildings, and lead in soil around homes. Children can also be exposed to lead from additional sources including contaminated drinking water and take-home exposures from a workplace.

In Jefferson County approximately 60% of children receive a lead test at age one and only 50% at age 2. Even with these low test numbers, **172 Jefferson County children** in 2014 had a lead test result of 5 micrograms per deciliter or greater which according to the CDC indicates a level of concern. To increase awareness of childhood lead poisoning prevention, the Jefferson County Public Health Service (JCPHS), along with CDC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. This year's NLPPW theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of testing your home, testing your child, and learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects.

On Monday, October 26th from Noon-4pm, the JCPHS will offer lead poisoning screening at the Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown. To register for an appointment call 786-3720. The screening is a blood test done via a finger stick.

Despite the continued presence of lead in the environment, lead poisoning is entirely preventable. Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple things you can do to help protect your family:

1. Get your Home Tested. Before you buy an older home, ask for a lead inspection. Go to epa.gov to find a local certified inspector.
2. **Get your Child Tested.** Even if your young children seem healthy, ask your doctor to test them for lead. In New York children must be tested at age one and two. If you are concerned about your child's blood lead level call 786-3720 to schedule a screening.
3. Get the Facts! Learn about lead poisoning at www.jcphs.org or call 1-800-424-LEAD.

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