

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**GTCHD is Promoting Lead Poisoning Prevention Week: October 19-25**

*A little lead can cause big problems*

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD) is promoting National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to raise awareness about lead poisoning and encourage preventive actions.

“Although lead exposure can harm anyone, young children are most vulnerable due to its negative health effects,” said GTCHD Lead Program Coordinator Amy Leiva, BSN, RN. “Lead poisoning can interfere with a child’s physical and cognitive development, which impacts learning, behavior, hearing, speech, and growth. This emphasizes the importance of lead prevention efforts, including early detection.”

Michigan law now requires that all children be tested for lead in their blood at the ages of 12 months and 24 months, as well as at other intervals based on their risk of exposure. This requirement is known as [Universal Blood Lead Testing](#). It’s the physician’s responsibility to conduct the test or to order it.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), many children ingest lead dust by putting objects such as toys and dirt in their mouths, eating lead paint chips, ingesting contaminated food or water, and breathing in lead dust. However, lead exposure and lead poisoning are preventable with simple actions such as:

- Keeping homes clean and dust-free
- Wiping a wet sponge or rag around painted areas where friction can generate dust, such as doors, windows, and drawers, to remove paint chips and dust.
- Washing hands often with soap and warm water
- Eating a diet high in Iron, Calcium, and Vitamin C
- Playing in the grass
- For homes built before 1978, hiring a certified lead professional for renovation or repair work
- Washing toys, pacifiers, and bottles
- Before drinking or cooking, flushing the home’s pipes with running water

The GTCHD has a [Lead Poisoning Prevention](#) program that works with physician offices to connect families to resources if lead is suspected in their homes. Our public health nurses provide case management when lead levels are elevated and share prevention tips. To learn more, call the GTCHD at 231-995-6111.

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