

FACT SHEET

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Lead Poisoning's Impact on Young Children

Lead poisoning can affect nearly every system in the body and is especially harmful to children in their first five years of life because it disrupts the rapid brain development they are undergoing. While there is no safe level of lead in the body, public health actions are recommended to be initiated when a child has blood lead levels of 5 micrograms per deciliter of blood. Children living at or below the poverty line and who live in older housing are at greater risk.



Lead Poisoning Can Cause:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system.
- Slowed growth and development.
- Speech and hearing problems.
- Learning disabilities (e.g., reduced IQ, ADHD).
- Behavioral problems (e.g. juvenile delinquency and criminal behavior).
- Preterm birth for pregnant moms.

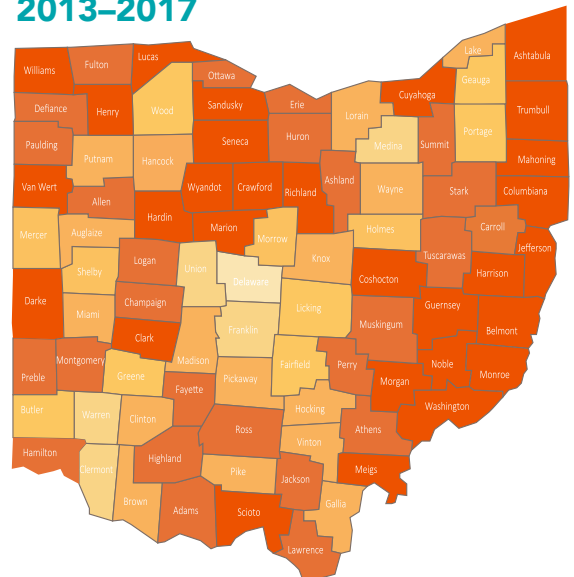


At very high levels, lead poisoning can cause seizures, coma and even death.



Early access to treatment reduces the likelihood of the long-term negative effects.

Lead Exposure Risk by County Using Poverty and Housing Data, 2013–2017



low lead exposure risk

high lead exposure risk

What Are the Sources?

The primary source of lead exposure among children is deteriorated lead-based paint (dust).

ODH estimates **3.7 million Ohio households** contain lead-based paint, which is the primary source of lead poisoning. In addition, houses built before 1978 are at high risk of causing lead poisoning in children. This means that **42% of all housing units in Ohio** likely contain lead hazards.

Children can also be exposed in utero through their mother's blood supply.

Other sources include soil, water & consumer products.

How Many Are Affected?

In 2016, **3% of the 0-5 year olds** tested in Ohio had confirmed blood lead levels of 5 µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter) or greater.

However, **fewer than 40% of our most at-risk kids were tested.** (Those living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.)

Also, children on Medicaid are at higher risk for lead poisoning, meaning:

- **More than half of Ohio children are at high risk of lead poisoning.**

HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL EFFORTS

Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition

The Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition is a public-private partnership comprised of approximately 200 members committed to advancing comprehensive, sustainable, and preventive solutions to lead poisoning in Cleveland. Components of this long-term, lead safe solution include lead exposure prevention, screening, treatment and intervention, and education and outreach. As a part of their immediate action plan, the coalition is working to propose legislative recommendations, create a Cleveland Lead Safe Home Fund, host a Lead Safe Homes Summit, and advocate for resources at the state and federal levels.

Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development Investigation & Abatement Efforts

The Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) has been involved in efforts to mitigate the dangers of lead, particularly concerning lead-based paint since 1992. COAD has worked with the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Office of Community Development and others to provide affordable training to those in Appalachian Ohio who deal with lead-based paint in housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs. COAD professionals have worked with early childcare professionals to help them identify potential lead hazards for children in their networks, provided training to health departments, as well as to Parent Teacher Associations and other child-oriented organizations.

Children tested in Cleveland had a higher rate of lead poisoning than children tested in Flint, Michigan during the height of its lead poisoning crisis.

– The Plain Dealer, Cleveland

HOW CAN OHIO RESPOND?

- Deepen investments in lead abatement efforts, especially in high-risk dwellings.
- Ensure all children who are at-risk of lead poisoning are tested each year, especially those identified in high-risk communities.
- Increase investments in early intervention services to provide kids who have tested positive for lead poisoning with additional support for healthy physical, mental, and social emotional development that better prepares them for kindergarten.



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