



For Immediate Release:

October 22, 2010

Promote Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 24-30

LOS ANGELES – In observance of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, the Department of Public Health today joined with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in encouraging residents to check out their homes for sources of lead exposure that can lead to health problems for their children. This year's theme, "Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future," underscores the importance of learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects on children.

"In 2009, 671 children in Los Angeles County had seriously elevated blood-lead levels, which is entirely preventable," said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. "Lead can seriously affect a child's brain and nervous system and may cause learning and behavioral problems." A blood lead test is the only way to identify and confirm elevated lead levels in children.

According to the CDC an estimated 250,000 children in the United States have blood lead levels high enough to cause significant damage to their health. The main cause of lead poisoning in Los Angeles County children is exposure to peeling lead-based paint. Lead-based paint is commonly found in houses, apartments, and buildings built before 1978. Dust from the deteriorating paint can settle on toys, windowsills, and floors, and children can swallow this dust or paint chips.

Other sources of lead exposure could be:

- Ground soil that has been contaminated by lead paint, lead dust, or leaded gasoline;
- Lead dust that comes into the home on work clothes or work boots;
- Folk or traditional remedies, such as Azarcón and Greta;
- Various imported goods, such as toys, candy, ceramics, and children's jewelry;
- Hobbies using items that contain lead, such as soldering, making stained glass, and handling bullets or fishing sinkers.

"If you have young children and are concerned that your home may have lead-based paint or other sources of lead exposure, get the facts," Dr. Fielding said. "Public Health can provide information on sources of lead poisoning and, if necessary, referrals to certified lead inspectors through the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Hotline at 1-800-LA-4-LEAD." **Parents who are concerned about their children's exposure to lead are urged to ask their child's doctor about lead testing.** Parents who do not have a doctor for their child can also call the hotline for referrals to free and low-cost health services for children and teens.



All parents and caregivers of young children are invited to learn how to protect their children from this silent and serious environmental threat. Free materials in many languages, as well as answers to questions on lead poisoning prevention, are available by calling 1-800-LA-4-LEAD or online at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/lead>.

You can also sign up to receive a lead poisoning prevention text message every day during the week of October 24 to 30, and a general poisoning prevention tip once a week after that for the rest of the year by texting “Tips” or “Puntos” for Spanish to 69866. Please check with your cell phone company for applicable texting charges. This service is provided by the California Poison Control System.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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