



# ALLEGHENY COUNTY

ALWAYS INSPIRING

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 26, 2017

**Contact:** Ryan Scarpino  
Public Health Information Officer  
412-578-8312 (office)  
412-339-7995 (cell)  
[Ryan.Scarpino@AlleghenyCounty.us](mailto:Ryan.Scarpino@AlleghenyCounty.us)

## Universal Blood Lead Level Testing Regulation Goes Into Effect January 1, 2018

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is reminding parents and providers that a regulation requiring all children in the county, unless otherwise exempted, to have their blood lead levels tested goes into effect on January 1, 2018.

Under the regulation, referred to as Article XXIII, each child will be screened between 9 and 12 months of age and again at 24 months of age. A child designated as high risk, as determined by a medical practitioner and based on the child's exposure to lead and any other factors indicating high risk, will be screened annually from 12 months of age to 72 months of age. Children who have missed being tested at these ages will need to be tested prior to entering kindergarten.

The regulation, which applies to all residents and schools of Allegheny County, is meant to boost early detection and treatment of lead poisoning and reduce the incidence, impact, and cost of the problem. It also will enhance countywide surveillance of childhood lead poisoning.

"Lead exposure can cause serious health problems, particularly for children," said Dr. Karen Hacker, ACHD Director. "Here in Allegheny County, we have multiple sources of potential exposure, including lead-containing paint and dust, water from lead pipes, and soil. Blood lead testing is important to determine if your child has been exposed. Parents and caregivers should have their children tested at the one-year pediatric visit and again at the second-year pediatric visit."

In preparation for the new regulation, ACHD is providing every pediatrician's office and family medicine practice in the county with a comprehensive information packet, which includes guidelines for physicians about various test results, a lead prevention brochure, and information about free programs for eligible families. That information can be found at: <http://www.achd.net/lead/info-for-doctors.html>. ACHD also is offering testing at its facilities for uninsured or underinsured families, and parents or guardians can call 412-687-2243 for more information.

Lead is a neurotoxin and a serious threat to public health. There is no safe lead level in children. Lead can cause significant behavioral and learning problems, lower IQ, hyperactivity and ADD, and hearing problems. At high levels, exposure can cause seizures, coma, and even death.

For more information about ACHD's approach to preventing lead exposure, visit <http://www.achd.net/lead/>, and for a comprehensive Q&A about the new universal blood lead level testing regulation, visit <http://www.achd.net/legal/pub/pdf/Article-XXIII-FAQ.pdf>.

###

Karen Hacker, MD, MPH, Director  
**Allegheny County Health Department – Public Information Office**  
542 Fourth Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
Phone: 412-687-ACHD (2243) | Fax: 412-578-8325 | [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net)

---

Follow us: [allegheny alerts](#) | [facebook](#) | [google+](#) | [instagram](#) | [linkedin](#) | [pinterest](#) | [twitter](#) | [youtube](#)