

R. Joseph Ebel, R.S., M.S., M.B.A.  
Health Commissioner



(740)349-6535  
(740)349-6474 WIC  
(740)349-6475 Environmental  
(740)349-6476 Nursing  
(740)349-6510 FAX  
[www.lickingcohealth.org](http://www.lickingcohealth.org)

## Licking County Health Department

675 Price Road

Newark, OH 43055

### **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention and Awareness**

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CONTACT: Mary Beth Hagstad, R.N., M.S.N., C.N.S., [mhagstad@lickingcohealth.org](mailto:mhagstad@lickingcohealth.org), (740) 349-6685

LICKING COUNTY, OHIO - Childhood lead poisoning remains a health risk for Ohio children between the ages of six months and six years of age. Lead is a toxic metal used in products such as vinyl mini-blinds, leaded crystal, dishware, and pottery coatings. Many years ago it was found in paint.

According to Licking County Health Commissioner, Joe Ebel, "Lead-based paint is still found in homes built before 1978. In Licking County, homes in the zip code areas of 43055 and 43056 are older and are more likely to still have lead-based paint on them." When the paint peels and chips, young children are likely to ingest small paint chips. When doors or windows are repeatedly opened, the friction causes the lead paint to wear down, creating a fine, invisible dust. Children are then poisoned by consuming lead dust through normal hand-to-mouth activities.

Lead interferes with the development and functioning of almost all body organs and systems such as the central nervous system. Lead poisoning in young children can cause brain, liver, and kidney damage. Learning and behavioral problems have been traced to lead poisoning, as well as hearing loss and slow development.

Parents can help prevent lead poisoning by keeping their house clean. They should wash floors and window sills often, and dust with a damp cloth. Children's hands should be washed frequently. Giving children healthy, well-balanced meals and snacks is another way to help prevent lead poisoning.

Usually, parents do not know if their child has been lead poisoned. If the child lives or frequently visits a home that was built before 1950, or if the child lives in or frequently visits in a home built before 1978 that is undergoing remodeling, the child should be tested for lead. If the child frequently comes in contact with an adult who works with lead, such as in doing welding, pottery, construction, or ammunition casting, the child should be tested. Also, if the child lives in or frequently visits a house that has peeling, chipping, or chalking paint, the parents should ask the child's doctor to test them for lead poisoning.

For more information, please call the Licking County Health Department at (740) 349-6535 or visit: [www.lickingcohealth.org](http://www.lickingcohealth.org).