

## Arlington County Public Health Division (ACPHD) Answers to PTA Questions about Lead

### Background

The vast majority of exposures to lead in Arlington occur in the home environment. These exposures include lead paint, recalled toys, toy jewelry, candies, and cosmetics - the latter three typically coming from other countries. ACPHD recommends parents talk to their child's health care provider about lead if they have concerns. If it is warranted, the health care provider will order lead testing for the child. If the results indicate lead exposures of concern, the provider will report this to the health department as required and ACPHD will work with the provider and the family to help identify the source of exposure.

1. **Are physicians required to report abnormal lead levels in children to ACPHD? If so, what is the threshold level above which reporting is required?**
  - Yes, health care providers are required to report levels higher than a certain threshold to ACPHD.
  - For children 15 years of age or younger, healthcare providers must report lead levels equal to or above 10 micrograms per deciliter found in the blood.
2. **What actions does ACPHD take when reports are made?**
  - When a provider reports a lead level as required to ACPHD, the Division begins case management activities.
    - The case management unit provides lead education to the family and recommends lead testing of additional family members as appropriate. In addition, the unit refers families to social services as needed and reviews the schedule for additional lead testing for the child with the family.
      - A case management staff member makes a home visit to assess the home situation following state guidelines. If the situation warrants per state guidelines, case management staff get environmental health staff involved to also make a home visit and sample for lead in the home environment.
3. **Does ACPHD provide free blood lead testing?**
  - ACPHD does not routinely conduct blood lead testing. Lead testing is done through the child's health care provider.
  - As mentioned above, ACPHD works with the family and the child's health care provider once a problem with lead exposure is identified.
4. **If ACPHD does not conduct lead testing, how can parents obtain free or low cost testing?**
  - We advise that parents concerned about lead in their children to work with their child's health care provider to understand the risks for lead exposure. Testing will be recommended by the provider based on the provider's assessment of exposure risk in the child.
  - There are health care providers in the community who provide outpatient pediatric services on a sliding fee scale to children so that children get the care they need.
  - Parents can work with Arlington County Public Health Division's School Health Bureau Staff – public health nurses and school health aides – in their child's school if they need assistance finding a health care provider to work with.

**For more information about lead and children's health**, please review the attached fact sheet from the Virginia Department of Health.