

## **Getting Lead Out of the Home - National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Starts Oct. 21**

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(10/19/07) National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is set aside to educate parents and children about the dangers of lead exposure, especially lead-paint hazards in housing. As part of the observance, many states and communities will offer free lead screening, and conduct education and awareness events.

Lead exposure among young children has been drastically reduced over the last three decades due to federal, state and local regulations that banned lead in gasoline and house paint, and efforts to reduce or cleanup lead in industrial emissions, drinking water, consumer goods, hazardous sites and other sources. In 1978, there were about 13.5 million children in the United States with elevated blood-lead levels. Today, approximately 310,000 children ages 1-5 years in the United States have elevated blood-lead levels.

It is the federal government's goal to totally eliminate childhood lead poisoning by 2010.

Although most lead exposure occurs when people eat lead paint chips or lead-dust, EPA estimates that 10 to 20 percent of human exposure to lead may come from lead in drinking water. A DVD, "What Your School or Child Care Facility Should Know About Lead in Drinking Water" was recently made available to the public and sent to the 50 largest school districts in the country to help increase their understanding of the importance of testing for lead in drinking water.

Lead is a highly toxic element that cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children six and under are most at risk because their bodies are growing quickly.

The theme for this year's lead week is "Protect Our Most Valuable Resource -- Our Children."