

# Blood Lead Testing in Texas: Reporting Information for Providers



# Contents

[Why is lead dangerous? ..... Slide 3](#)

[How do I know if a person has an elevated blood lead level? ..... Slide 4](#)

[How do I test a person for lead? ..... Slide 5](#)

[What lead tests am I required to report? ..... Slide 6](#)

[Who is required to report lead tests? ..... Slide 7](#)

[What information am I required to report? ..... Slide 8](#)

[Why is timely reporting important? ..... Slide 9](#)

[What does DSHS do with the report? ..... Slide 10](#)

# Why is lead dangerous?

Lead is a poison that serves no known purpose in the body. Lead enters your body when you swallow or breathe in lead dust or particles.

Lead poisoning often has no symptoms. People who appear healthy can have lead poisoning. The symptoms of lead poisoning are often mistaken for other problems. Some symptoms are:

- Fatigue
- Tingling hands & feet
- Headache
- Memory problems
- Irritability
- Anemia
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Nausea
- High blood pressure
- Reproductive problems
- Weight loss

Extreme cases of lead poisoning can result in:

- Convulsions
- Coma
- Death

# How do I know if a person has an elevated blood lead level?

The only way to know if a person has an elevated blood lead level is to perform a blood lead test.

A blood lead level is 10  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$  or higher for any individual is elevated.

A venous test is the preferred method of testing; however, capillary samples also can be used.

# How do I test a person for lead?

- Sample collection is critical to receiving an accurate result.
- Every year, laboratories cannot analyze thousands of samples because of inaccurate sample collection.
- Learn [how](#) to collect a good specimen.

# What lead tests am I required to report?

Reporting all blood lead levels is a law in Texas.

Texas Administrative Code requires the reporting of all blood lead levels for

- Persons under age 15 - [Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 37, Rule §37.334](#)
- Persons age 15 and older - [Title 25, Part 1, Chapter 99, Rule §99.1](#)

# Who is required to report lead tests?

Persons required to report all blood lead tests are:

- Physicians
- Any persons in charge of a clinical or hospital laboratory, blood bank, mobile unit or other facility in which a laboratory examination reveals evidence of the reportable disease
- Health Professionals
- Administrator of a hospital
- Professional Registered Nurse
- Administrator or Director of a public health or private child care facility
- Administrator of a home health agency
- Administrator or Health Official of a public or private institution of higher education
- Superintendent, Manager or Health Official of a public or private camp, home or institution
- Parent, Managing Conservator, or Guardian

# What information am I required to report?

- To report a blood test for a person
- Under age 15, use the [Child Blood Lead Reporting Form](#).
- Age 15 and older, use the [Adult Blood Lead Reporting Form](#)

# Why is timely reporting important?

Not reporting all the information causes a delay in follow-up services for a person with an elevated blood lead level.

This means that a sick person may not get the help and information they need fast enough. This can result in more severe illness. It can also result in illness to others.

A person who works with lead may not know that lead can be carried home on hair, skin, and shoes. This person may bring lead into the home. This can expose other people in the home to lead. A delay in follow-up may prevent us from sharing this information, and could result in additional exposures.

# What does DSHS do with the report?

- Use the information to communicate with physicians on timely and appropriate follow-up methods
- Use the demographic information to send educational materials to families
- Use the address information to connect families to local resources
- Use the address information to identify geographic locations where targeted screening and action is needed
- Use the race/ethnicity information to identify subsections of the population at risk for lead poisoning
- Use the address and race/ethnicity information to identify new sources of lead exposure
- Use the address and race/ethnicity to demonstrate a need for additional social and environmental resources
- Use the address and race/ethnicity to assist local municipalities and other organizations in procuring additional social and environmental resources

# Contact Information

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