

Lead-Safe Texas

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Issue 1

Blood Lead Surveillance Branch (BLSB)

Texas Department of State Health Services
dshs.texas.gov/lead

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With the support of communities throughout Texas, regional public health offices, and Texas health care workers, BLSB is working diligently toward a safer, healthier Texas.

About this Newsletter

This newsletter provides information on lead poisoning prevention. You will find all newsletters on our website at dshs.texas.gov/lead/newsletters.

About the Blood Lead Surveillance Branch

The Texas Department of State Health Services Blood Lead Surveillance Branch (BLSB) maintains a surveillance system of blood lead test results for children and adults. Our goal is to eliminate lead poisoning as a public health problem in Texas. We do this by working with health, housing, and environmental organizations. With the support of communities, regional public health offices, and Texas health care workers, BLSB is working diligently toward a safer, healthier Texas.

What is Lead?

Lead is a highly toxic metal. In the past, lead caused extensive environmental contamination and health problems in many parts of the world. In 1978, the federal government banned the sale of lead-containing paint for consumer use to reduce the amount of lead in the environment.

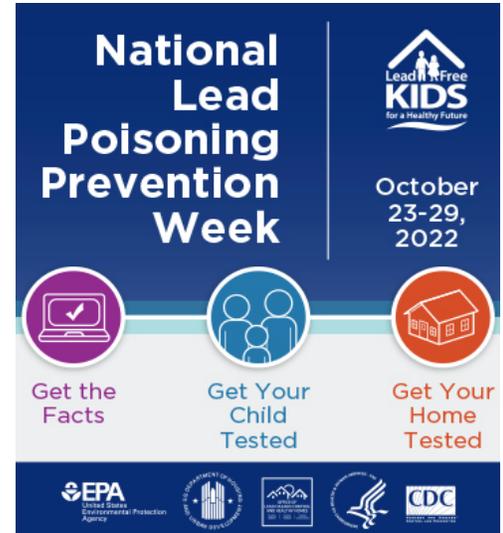
If a home was built before 1978, there may be a chance it contains lead-based paint. Lead can also be in soil, drinking water, amulets, pottery, cosmetics and even toys.

National Lead Poison Prevention Week 2022

Every year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, team up with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promote and observe National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (NLPPW). This year NLPPW falls on October 23-29, 2022. The goal of NLPPW is to heighten awareness around lead poison and increase prevention efforts. The theme of NLPPW this year revolve around three key points:

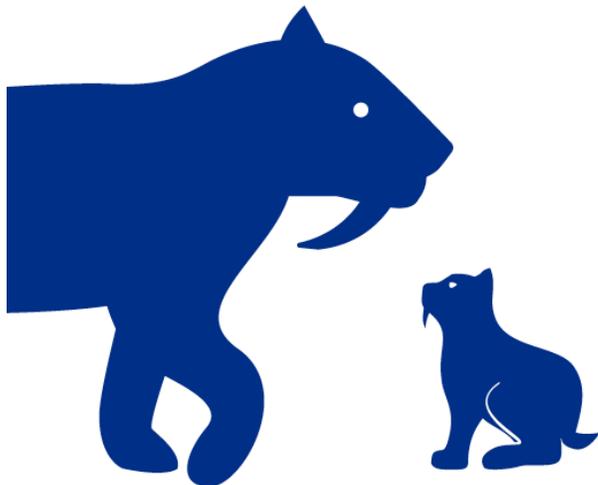
1. **Get the Facts**
2. **Get Your Home Tested**
3. **Get Your Child Tested**

For NLPPW 2022 the Texas Blood Lead Surveillance Branch will be running our social media “Extinct Campaign,” showcasing that while things like saber-tooth tigers are extinct, lead poisoning is not. The social media campaign will align with the CDC key points and will be posted through out the week on various Department of State Health Services platforms including [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).



Want more information on NLPPW? Visit the [CDC website](#)

SABERTOOTH TIGERS



...are extinct.
LEAD POISONING isn't.



#GETLEADCHECKEDTEXAS

Lead is especially harmful to children under the age of 6.
Ask your doctor if your child should be tested.



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LeadCare Recall Update

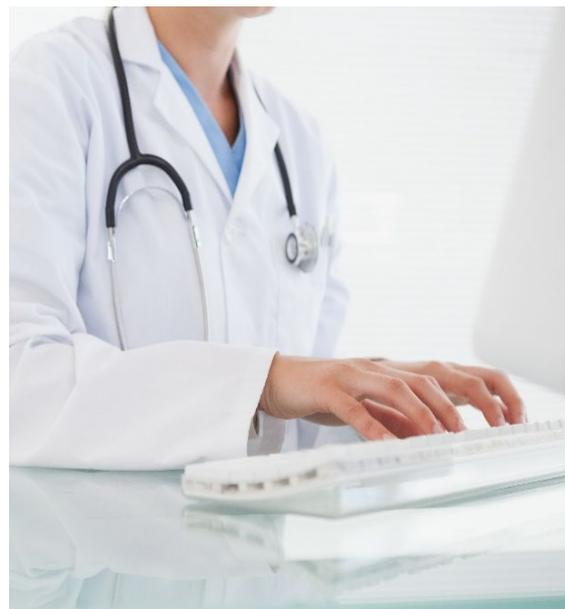
On May 17, 2021, Magellan Diagnostics issued a recall notice to customers and distributors notifying them of an ongoing issue with testing of the controls included in specified lots of LeadCare II, LeadCare Plus, and LeadCare Ultra Blood Lead Test Kits. As the issue had the potential to underestimate blood lead levels when processing patient samples, Magellan voluntarily recalled the test kits and temporarily suspended shipping. Having falsely low results could pose potential danger to populations such as children or pregnant individuals. To review the test kit LOT numbers impacted by the recall, please visit the [Magellan website](#).

As of February 2022, Magellan resumed the distribution of LeadCare II test kits. Magellan has conducted numerous studies and experiments to understand the root cause of the issue and has identified suitable replacement materials such that shipments can resume.

Reporting Results

Reporting test results to the Texas Child Lead Registry is a vital step in the testing process. This surveillance data is used to inform medical and health professionals, target outreach activities and create educational materials. Texas law requires reporting of all blood lead test results – **both elevated and non-elevated** – for children age 14 and younger. The health care provider who orders the test should also submit results to TXCLPPP's Texas Child Lead Registry, regardless of where the testing is conducted or analyzed. It should not be assumed that the lab has reported the result.

Electronic reporting of blood lead test results is preferred because it ensures that the tests are entered into the database in a timely and efficient manner, allowing for quick and easy access to the data and faster follow-up on elevated blood lead levels. While most results are reported electronically, **6.5% of results are still reported via fax.**



How to Report Electronically:

- Complete the Electronic Reporting Sign-up Form, on the [DSHS website](#). Once you submit your information, someone from the Texas Department of State Health Services will be in contact with you to provide instructions on how to upload the results to a secure ftp server.
- Access the National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (NEDSS) on the [DSHS website](#).
- If using Lead Care II, a software can be downloaded to streamline electronic reporting on the [Magellan website](#).

Blood Lead Levels in Children

There are several easy ways to protect children from lead poisoning and exposure.

- 1. Having children tested for lead.** Health care providers can do a simple blood test to check children for potential exposure.
- 2. Being aware of certain toys and products that children use.** Toys can contain lead, especially if they are older or imported.
- 3. Regular house cleaning.** Wet mopping surfaces such as floors, windows, and windowsills can help remove dust which is a common source of lead in homes built before 1978.
- 4. Covering bare soil.** Protecting soil that is bare by covering it with products like grass or mulch can help prevent lead exposure from contaminated soil.
- 5. No shoes in the house.** Surprisingly, shoes can track lead contaminated dust and soil through the house whether it's from work or hobbies that contain lead.
- 6. Shower and change clothes.** Often families can be exposed to lead dust that is tracked through the home. This is preventable by changing clothes and taking a shower.

Community Spotlight

In early 2022, Harris County Public Health was awarded \$20 million in funding from the U.S. Treasury Department under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) related to lead.

From Harris County Public Health

"We are excited and grateful to receive ARPA funding as we ramp up our Lead Abatement and Prevention Program to address the many properties across Harris County in need of treatment. Having the ability to conduct additional lead abatement activities in child-occupied facilities and owner-occupied or renter-occupied housing units is an integral part in developing a safer and healthier future for our county. The funding will also allow our program to continue operating out of our four Women, Infants and Children (WIC) clinics and our mobile sites so we can continue to expand our reach as well as provide on-demand lead screenings to residents who have limited access. Lastly, we also plan to expand our outreach efforts and engage areas of the community who could most use our referrals, services and education."



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