



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

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MONROE COUNTY RELEASES 2024 CHILDHOOD LEAD TESTING AND EXPOSURE DATA

*Expanded screening helps connect more families to support and prevention
resources*

ROCHESTER, NY —The Monroe County Department of Public Health today announced that 13,582 children were tested for lead poisoning in 2024, up from 12,788 in 2023, an increase of 6%. Of those tested, 299 were found to have elevated blood lead levels of 5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL) or higher, an increase from 241 cases in 2023. This increase in identified cases appears connected in part to expanded testing and outreach, including screening among families who may not have had consistent access to testing before coming to Monroe County.

New York State law mandates that all children be tested for lead at ages 1 and 2, with continued screening for at-risk children until age 6. Lead poisoning can lead to serious developmental issues, including learning disabilities and behavioral problems. Older homes, particularly those built before 1978, continue to pose a significant risk due to lead-based paint.

“Lead exposure can harm a child’s growth, learning and long-term health, but it is preventable,” said **Monroe County Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Marielena Vélez De Brown**. “Because most children with lead poisoning do not show symptoms at first, testing is an essential step to protect their health and connect families with support early. We also know that the safest homes are ones where lead hazards — like peeling paint or older plumbing — are fixed before children are exposed. We encourage families, landlords and neighbors to learn about lead safety and simple steps they can take to help keep children healthy.”

Families and caregivers can learn more about preventing lead exposure and steps to protect children by visiting www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead.

Among the 299 children found to have elevated lead levels in 2024, 230 had blood lead levels between 5 and 9.9 µg/dL, 35 had levels between 10 and 14.9 µg/dL, 14 had levels between 15 and 19.9 µg/dL, and 20 had levels above 20 µg/dL.

Monroe County works closely with the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (CPLP), a local organization committed to eliminating childhood lead exposure through public education and advocacy.

“We know what works to prevent lead poisoning, and we must continue doing it together,” said **Clare Henrie, director of the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning**. “This data reminds us that testing,

safe housing and community awareness are essential to protecting children. Every child in Monroe County deserves a healthy home and a bright future free from the harms of lead exposure.”

Monroe County encourages all parents, caregivers and property owners to reduce lead exposure risks. Have your children tested for lead and inspect your homes for potential hazards. For more information, visit the [Monroe County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#) and theleadcoalition.org.

What Elevated Blood Lead Levels Mean

- 5-9.9 µg/dL: At this level, children may show no immediate symptoms, but their brain development could still be affected. Early intervention and eliminating the source of exposure are crucial.
- 10-14.9 µg/dL: This range is associated with a greater risk of learning and behavioral problems.
- 15-19.9 µg/dL: Children at these levels may face more serious developmental risks, and the home environment should be evaluated for lead abatement.
- 20+ µg/dL: This level is considered dangerous, and medical intervention, such as chelation therapy, may be necessary to remove lead from the child’s bloodstream.

What Parents Can Do

Parents and caregivers can take several important steps to reduce the risk of lead exposure:

1. Test your child: Ensure your child gets a blood test for lead at ages 1 and 2.
2. Inspect your home: Check for peeling or chipping paint, especially in homes built before 1978.
3. Keep areas clean: Regularly wet mop floors and wipe windowsills with wet cloths to reduce lead dust.
4. Use lead-safe practices: Follow lead-safe practices during renovations to prevent lead dust exposure.
5. Monitor toys and products: Be cautious of recalled toys and imported products that may contain lead.

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