



this issue

COVER STORY: The Silent Epidemic
 The reasoning behind blood lead testingpp. 1,2
 Got LeadCare?
 Early Detection+Early Intervention=A Healthy Childp. 3
 Going Green
 Switching from hard copy to electronic onlyp. 4
 Location, Location, Location
 It's important to report the child's addressp. 4
 Survey: Electronic Publicationspp. 5,6
 Reporting Childhood Blood Lead Testsp. 7

The Silent Epidemic

The reasoning behind blood lead testing

Patrick had a lead test at his 12-month well-child checkup. His mother, Jennifer Baker who is an LVN, discovered her son had a dangerously high level of lead in his blood. A follow-up venous test confirmed a result of 66 - a level requiring immediate medical intervention.¹

Patrick had to go through four rounds of chelation, a complicated nutritional regime, and multiple visits to the doctor's office.

“I’m a nurse – how could I not have known?”
Jennifer Baker, LVN

¹Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends public health actions be initiated for blood lead levels greater than 10 mcg/dL.

THE FACTS

- Parents cannot protect their children when they do not know there is a problem.
- Children exposed to lead may not show obvious symptoms, allowing the condition to go undiagnosed.
- The only way to know if a child has lead in his blood is through blood lead testing.



Who is at risk?

All children under the age of 6 years old are at risk because they are growing rapidly and because they tend to put their hands or other objects into their mouths. However, children living at or below the poverty line who live in older housing are at greatest risk.

The *Pb-110: Risk Assessment for Lead Exposure, Parent Questionnaire* is a great tool that healthcare providers may use with parents to determine if a child is at risk for exposure to lead. Indicators listed on the *Pb-110* are not limited to a child's socioeconomic status and therefore, may assist in identifying children who otherwise may not receive a blood lead test. The *Pb-110* is available for download at:

www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead. Select the "For Providers" tab.



Health effects of lead

Lead at high levels in the body can cause coma, seizures, and even death. Lower levels of lead can cause adverse health effects on the central nervous system, kidney, and blood cells. Recent research suggests that there is no safe level of lead in the blood; levels as low as 10 mcg/dL can impair mental and physical development. Other health effects of lead include lower IQ levels, shortened attention spans, and increased behavioral problems.



Screening and testing

Along with the *Pb-110*, Clinicians should use the *Blood Lead Screening and Testing Guidelines for Texas Children: Quick Reference Guide (QRG)* to determine whether a child should receive a blood lead test. The *QRG* is available for download at www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead.

Select the "For Providers" tab.

About LeadCareII

The LeadCareII blood lead analyzer is a portable device used to screen children for lead. Test results take approximately 3 minutes, measuring levels from 3.3mcg/dL through 65mcg/dL. The available printer attachment produces a sticker that can be placed directly on the blood lead report form, eliminating the risk of transposing errors by hand.

The LeadCareII could be a valuable screening tool for providers who want to triage those patients who will not require follow-up for lead levels. Because of the mobility of many families most at risk for lead poisoning, and the difficulty of reaching their children for follow-up, the fast results delivered by this system could help more children get appropriate treatment and case management.



Got LeadCare?

Early Detection + Early Intervention = A Healthy Child

LeadCareII Screening in Texas

Over an eighteen-month period, TX CLPPP received 14,989 blood lead tests from LeadCareII users. Of these, 124 blood lead tests reported elevated blood lead levels (EBLL) - a level greater than or equal to 10mcg/dL.

Healthcare providers may use the LeadCareII only as a screening tool. If a LeadCareII test indicates an EBLL, the provider must obtain a diagnostic EBLL - a venous sample analyzed by a different laboratory method. Of the 124 EBLLs:

- 106 were analyzed using a different laboratory method, resulting in 53 diagnostic EBLLs and 53 blood lead levels less than 10mcg/dL.
- 18 were not analyzed by a different laboratory method - LeadCareII result reported again.

Reporting: Electronic or Hard Copy?

Providers/Clinics can submit LeadCareII results electronically or by hard copy:

- **Electronic Submissions**
 - Excel spreadsheet or LeadCareII software
 - You can submit several tests per file
- **Hard Copy Submissions**
 - Fax or mail
 - You can only submit one test per paper form

Why submit electronically?

Handwriting the information into a form is often difficult to read and may require a call from our office to verify information, causing your staff to take extra time to verify information.

Comments

Lead contamination on the skin may be the cause for 53 blood lead tests reported as elevated using the LeadCareII machine but were less than 10mcg/dL when analyzed by a different laboratory method. Washing with soap and water is crucial to remove possible lead contamination on the skin. We designed a poster entitled *Childhood Blood Lead Testing: Getting a Good Specimen*. The poster provides clinicians with information on proper blood collection methods. The poster is available on the TX CLPPPs website at: www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead. If you do not have access to the internet, call 1-800-588-1248, and we will mail a copy to you.

Going Green

Switching from hard copy to electronic only

Online e-news, blogs, and PDF versions of publications are becoming more popular, both as a replacement for and as a supplement to printed publications. With the introduction of hand-held devices that can make reading blogs, news, and other online content even easier, publications are taking on a new digital form.

TX CLPPP is committed to Going Green and need your help with the process. Typically, TX CLPPP distributes about 20,000 hard copies of the newsletter to healthcare professionals in Texas.

It's no small task to print and distribute the newsletter to your mailbox.

The plan to Go Green means TX CLPPP will no longer print hard copies; all publications will be exclusively released in an electronic format.

Ways you can receive the newsletter

- (1) Download the electronic copies (pdf) from: www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead.
- (2) Submit a request to receive the newsletter via email: feedback-CLPPP@dshs.state.tx.us

How can you help TX CLPPP Go Green?

Accept the newsletter via email or download if from the web site to view. If you don't have a computer or access to the Internet and want to continue receiving the newsletter, please contact us by phone at 1 (800) 588-1248.



Location, Location, Location

It's important to report the child's home address



The child's address provides information used to target prevention activities.

In the next issue of TX CLPPP News, we will examine in detail the impact of inaccurate residence addresses.

Accurate reporting helps protect all Texas children. For more information, see *Guidelines for Healthcare Providers and Labs: Reporting Childhood Blood Lead Tests* (page 7).

We Need Your Comments!

Newsletter and publications only offered electronically (see article on page 4)

TX CLPPP Newsletter

This newsletter is published for healthcare providers and staff throughout Texas. Please help us make this publication as useful as possible by completing the following questions below. Your comments will help us determine if hard copies will be printed and mailed in the future.

How would you like to receive this newsletter:

Electronically (PDF) by email

- email to: _____@_____

Electronically (PDF) from TX CLPPP's website

Hard copy (paper) by mail

Both electronic (PDF) and hard copy (paper)

What news and information do you want to see?

Updates on lab procedures

Epidemiological data

Information about exposure sources

County-by-county screening rates

News from health department lead programs around the state

Other:

Comments?

TX CLPPP Publications

Currently, publications (educational materials) are available electronically from TX CLPPP's website, and in hard copy from the DSHS warehouse. When the warehouse runs out of hard copies, all publications will be offered only electronically from TX CLPPP's website.

How would you like to receive TX CLPPP publications?

Electronically (PDF) from TX CLPPP's website

Hard copy by mail from DSHS warehouse

Both electronically and hard copy

**Pease fax
comments to:**
512-458-7699

or mail to:

Outreach Coordinator
Texas CLPPP
Texas Department of State Health Services
PO Box 149347, MC1964
Austin, TX 78714



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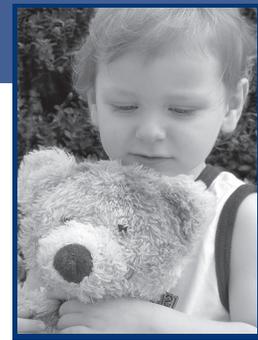
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Guidelines for Healthcare Providers and Labs: Reporting Childhood Blood Lead Tests



Accurate reporting helps protect all the children of Texas.

By tracking ALL childhood blood lead tests the State can better identify risk factors for all children and offer appropriate support for follow-up activities.



Child's name	Children with similar or identical first/last name combinations can more easily be distinguished if you report the child's complete name, including middle name (and titles such as Jr.).
Date of birth	Providing a child's date of birth rather than his age allows a more accurate identification of the record.
Gender	The name alone does not always indicate male or female – please include gender on every report.
Race & Ethnicity	Race and ethnicity are two distinct characteristics. Please check one box for each field, even if you must choose "Unknown." These two fields provide critical information used in targeting prevention activities.
Address	Along with race and ethnicity, child's current address provides information used in targeting prevention activities.
Blood lead result	Check How to Report (below) for reporting time frames.
Type of blood sample (capillary or venous)	It is very important to identify the type of test performed. If the test is not specified as venous, it can't count as confirmation of an elevated result. The state cannot conduct an environmental investigation without a confirmed lead level.
Name & address of provider	This refers to the ordering provider.
Name & address of testing lab	This is the laboratory doing the blood lead analysis.
Test date	The date the specimen was collected.

Know the Law:

As of June 1, 2003, immediate reporting to the Texas Child Lead Registry is required for **all blood lead tests** for persons age 14 or younger.

Physicians, laboratories, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare facilities must report.

How to Report:

• By phone: (toll-free) 1 (800) 588-1248	Immediately report by phone any test result 40µg/dL or over.
• By fax: (512) 458-7699	Immediately fax all test results between 10-39µg/dL and all follow-up tests.
• By mail: TX CLPPP Department of State Health Services PO Box 149347 Austin, Texas 78714	Remember: ALL lead tests must be reported, including those with results below 10.
• Electronic:	Call TX CLPPP (1-800-588-1248) and speak with the Surveillance Coordinator.



**Texas Department of State Health Services
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**



www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead

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Local Health Department CLPPP Programs

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San Antonio Metro	911 Castroville Rd.	San Antonio, TX 78237	210-434-0077
Harris County*	2223 West Loop South	Houston, TX 77027	713-439-6126
San Angelo - Tom Green County*	2 City Hall Plaza	San Angelo, TX 76903	325-657-4214
City of Galveston - Galveston County*	1207 Oak St. P.O. Box 939	La Marque, TX 77568	409-938-2322
City of Laredo - Webb County*	2600 Cedar Ave.	Laredo, TX 78044	956-795-4950



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