

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Get the Facts About Lead Exposure**

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is working to reduce childhood exposure to lead by increasing lead poisoning prevention awareness in our communities. Childhood exposure to lead can have serious health effects that may include damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning and behavior problems, hearing problems, and speech disability. Healthcare providers play a key role in preventing lead poisoning by identifying children at risk for exposure and testing blood lead levels.

#### **Lead Exposure Facts**

- Many homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint. Lead from paint, paint chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards, particularly to children and pregnant people.
- Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by:
  - Breathing in lead dust (especially during activities such as building renovations, repairs, or painting, or other occupational exposures).
  - Swallowing lead dust that settles on food, food preparation surfaces, floors, windowsills, and other places.
  - Eating paint chips or soil that contain lead.
  - Drinking water that is contaminated with lead.
- The most common sources of lead in drinking water are lead pipes, faucets, and fixtures.
- Lead may also be brought into the home on work clothes, shoes, and hair.

There are several tests available for water, paint, and other sources to find out if your home contains lead. The Environmental Protection Agency website [epa.gov](http://epa.gov) has resources to find testing or a certified risk assessor. You can also call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223 or the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).

“Anyone can be exposed to lead,” states Sionie Ball, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “There are often no obvious symptoms, which makes lead testing very important. Children between the ages of one through five years old should have a blood lead test. If their lead level is higher than recommended, a quick survey of your home can help identify the source of the lead exposure.”

For more information including a complete list of potential sources, visit [cdc.gov/lead](http://cdc.gov/lead). SWNPHD serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby’s) in McCook. The website [swhealth.ne.gov](http://swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram.

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