



VOL 2 ISSUE 2 MAY 2021

# NVCLPPP

Nevada Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

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## WHO WE ARE

The Nevada Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (NvCLPPP), partnered with the Nevada Public Health Foundation, is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of children by educating families and medical and service providers, on the effects of lead poisoning from older homes or items we bring into our homes. NvCLPPP aims to:

- Increase blood lead testing in Nevada
- Link children exposed to lead to services
- Improve methods of surveillance
- Provide education about lead to families, medical providers, and community partners

We are committed to working with health districts across the state and our community partners to increase the health and safety of Nevada's children. But we need your help! By learning about the pathways of lead exposure, the importance of testing, how to maintain a safe and healthy home, and how we can work together to keep kids safe, we can ensure a better Nevada for everyone. For a list of available educational classes and continuing education credits visit our website, [nvclppp.org](http://nvclppp.org) for more info. Classes can be made available using remote learning.

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## CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION RECALL NOTIFICATIONS

### Anker Play Products Recalls 10-in-1 Incredible Inventions Science Kit

Nearly 13,000 units of the 10-in-1 Incredible Inventions Science Kits were recalled on February 17, 2021 due to lead poisoning hazard. The red and blue magnet contains paint that violates the federal lead paint ban. The packaging of the product is also missing required warning labels for magnets and balloons.



# COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

**Betsy Huang, MD- Nevada Health Centers**

## Partnership Leads to Increased Onsite Childhood Lead Testing



We at NvCLPPP are grateful and proud to have numerous partnerships with key entities that work to reduce the incidence of childhood lead poisoning and provide care and resources to children who have been exposed to lead. In this issue, we would like to highlight our partnership with Dr. Betsy Huang, Medical Director and Pediatrician at Nevada Health Centers, and her take on important childhood lead poisoning issues.

### Why is lead testing important for a child's future?

Lead poisoning can have adverse effects on a child's growth and development. There are often no symptoms with lead poisoning so screening is important to diagnosis it.

### Why is prompt reporting of blood lead test results important for children in Nevada?

We don't have enough data for accurate lead poisoning prevalence in our state because screening and reporting rates are so low. We need this information to determine high risk populations so we can more effectively target those areas for screening and information dissemination.

### NvCLPPP partners with Nevada Health Centers-how is this partnership beneficial to you?

We were able to get funding for a lead machine in our office which has helped to significantly improve compliance with lead screening. We also get updated lead poisoning information for our staff and patients.

## Nevada has one of the lowest lead testing rates in the US. What are some steps that your office is taking to increase/encourage testing?

We offer lead testing for patients at the 12 and 24 months well checks as per the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease guidelines and at any visit if it is warranted. Since we have a lead machine in our office, it's easy to obtain the small blood sample and we get results within minutes. We also provide information for patients with elevated blood levels and connect them to local resources to help determine and eliminate, if possible, the lead exposure.

## Because of COVID-19, people have been concerned about leaving home to go to the doctors. What would you want to share with parents who are hesitant to bring kids in for their doctors' appointments?

All medical offices have taken extra precautions to maintain patient safety. These steps include extra cleaning, guidelines for patients entering our offices, limiting the number of patients in the waiting area, different areas for sick patients, and encouraging our staff to get the COVID-19 vaccines. We want our patients to know and feel that we are doing everything we can to keep them safe in our facilities.

# LEAD IN NEVADA

## Some Spices May Be Contaminated With Lead

In recent years, lead in spices has garnered increased attention as a source of lead poisoning. In some cases, unintentional lead contamination can occur from contaminated soil or a grinding wheel with lead components. In other cases, lead is intentionally mixed into spices to make colors more vibrant and/or to increase weight for sale.

In March 2019, a Las Vegas pediatrician found a 2-year old child with an elevated blood lead level (48 µg/dL). Not long after, the same pediatrician found another child with an elevated blood lead level (11 µg/dL)- and this 9-month-old baby was related to the first child. Any blood lead level at or above 5 µg/dL is considered elevated, however there is no safe level of lead in the body and lead is especially harmful to children's developing brains. The Southern Nevada Health District Environmental Investigator conducted separate evaluations for each of the two children since they lived in different households and had significantly different blood lead levels.

Amongst several items that were found to contain lead hazards in each of the children's' homes, turmeric spices were the primary cause of concern for both children. The turmeric spices found in the 9-month-old baby's home was imported from Afghanistan, while the turmeric found in the 2-year old child's home was from a local ethnic market.

Lab tests confirmed that both samples of turmeric spices contained high levels of lead that likely contributed to the elevated blood lead level in both children.



Image: Fresh and Dried Turmeric<sup>2</sup>

Both families were given information about lead in spices and made aware that lead is commonly added to spices in other countries to enhance the color and increase its weight. They were recommended to stop using the lead-containing turmeric and advised to obtain it from reputable vendors. This case highlights the need for parents and families to be aware of non-traditional sources of lead such as imported spices like turmeric.

## Recommendations to Reduce Exposure



**Until quality improves, avoid consuming spices that come from<sup>1</sup>:** Georgia, Bangladesh, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan and Mexico



Spices that **most likely to be contaminated** with lead include: Turmeric, cinnamon, Georgian saffron, tamarind pulp, chili powder, and paprika<sup>1</sup>



**Purchase spices from major brands that are sold at reputable retailers<sup>1</sup>.** Major brands have appropriate systems in place to ensure the quality and safety.



Avoid consuming/using spices and medicines that are **purchased online from non-reputable brands/retailers or sent overseas by friends and family**



**Grow your own herbs for spices.**



**Delay the use of spices with high lead exposure risk until after 6 years old.**



If you use spices that are known to be commonly contaminated with lead – such as the ones listed above – **get your children's blood lead level tested annually**, especially if they are under 6 years old.



# LEAVE LEAD behind

CDC estimates about **10,000 kids** with elevated blood lead levels may have gone undetected.

## IN THE MEDIA

### **CDC Estimates 10,000 Children Undetected and Untreated for Lead Poisoning**

Childhood lead screenings decreased significantly in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In a recent report, the CDC found that roughly 500,000 fewer children in the US were tested for lead exposure. Nationwide, it is estimated that about 10,000 children with elevated blood lead levels might have gone undetected and untreated. Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in lower health care utilization for regularly scheduled appointments such as well-child visits. In order to combat lower lead testing rates, the CDC recommends that providers:



Identify children who have missed well-child exams/recommended vaccinations



Contact them to schedule in-person appointments when possible

# LEAD EXPOSURE AND HEALTH

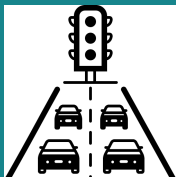
## Lead Exposure and Urban Stressors Compound Health Risks

Although lead poisoning has decreased in the past 45 years, the risk of lead exposure is not equally distributed.<sup>3</sup> Low-income communities, minorities, and those living in older housing in urban areas remain at higher threat to being exposed to lead hazards. Of the 62.4 million children living in U.S. urban areas, more than 22% live below the poverty line. Often living within older city areas, a multitude of risk factors, including, deteriorating housing, higher lead contamination of drinking water and unregulated pop-up auto repair facilities.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, renovations of older homes, child-care facilities, and schools can potentially spread harmful lead-based paint dust.

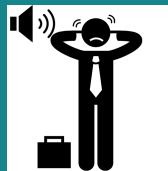
About 2.9 million Nevadans, or 90.3% of the state's population, reside in urban areas in which they are potentially exposed to a variety of urban stressors. With less control over their environment, city-dwellers face stressors such as:



Denser housing



Traffic



Higher noise levels



Increased light simulation



Exposure to crime<sup>3</sup>

When urban stressors are coupled with lead poisoning during early development, it may increase the risk of central nervous system dysfunction which can lead to a reduction in IQ points which are associated with lower economic productivity, and increased costs in special education services and criminal justice.<sup>4</sup> Each dollar invested in lead paint abatement results in a return of \$17-\$221.<sup>3</sup> Nationwide this would lead to a net savings of \$181-\$269 billion over the life course of a cohort of children.<sup>3</sup>

## What can we do?

Individuals who live in older homes should check their homes for lead exposures. Steps they can take are:



Keep children out of potentially contaminated areas



Filter water



Use wet-cleaning methods such as a mop to minimize the spread of lead dust



Remove potential sources of lead



Ensure that renovations in homes or structures built prior to 1978 are conducted by a certified lead-abatement contractor

### References:

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2. Lathuric. (2016). [Fresh and Dried Turmeric]. iStock. <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/turmeric>
3. Levin, R., Vieira, C. L. Z., Rosenbaum, M. H., Bischoff, K., Mordarski, D. C., & Brown, M. J. (2020). The Urban Lead (Pb) Burden in Humans, Animals and the Natural Environment. *Environmental Research*, 110377.
4. Gould, E. (2009). Childhood lead poisoning: conservative estimates of the social and economic benefits of lead hazard control. *Environmental health perspectives*, 117(7), 1162-1167.