



## Public Health

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### **Health officials urge awareness of childhood lead poisoning**

Riverside County health officials are urging parents and others to be aware of the dangers present in some everyday items that contain lead and how they can impact the health of young people during Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Oct. 22-28.

“The purpose of this campaign is to remind parents that lead poisoning can be harmful to young children’s health and development. It’s important for parents to ask their child’s doctor about blood lead testing,” said Dr. Geoffrey Leung, public health officer for Riverside County. “The test is simple but can make a real difference in the life of a developing child.”

Lead poisoning can seriously affect a child’s brain and nervous system. It can cause learning and behavioral problems. A blood lead test is the only way to identify lead poisoning in children.

In California, children can be exposed to lead by coming in contact with dust containing lead, chipping lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil. If families live or spend time near airports, they may be exposed to lead air pollution from gas in small airplanes. Other sources of lead poisoning include lead dust brought home on parents' work clothes, certain ceramic pottery, painted objects, traditional home remedies, some cosmetics, and imported spices, candies, and other food products.

Additionally, activities that involve lead products such as welding, making stained glass, and handling bullets or fishing sinkers can put children at risk.

Parents and caregivers of young children are invited to learn how to protect their children from this serious environmental disease by visiting the RUHS-Public Health webpage at [Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program | Riverside University Health System \(ruhealth.org\)](https://ruhealth.org/childhood-lead-poisoning-prevention-program).

Background materials are available upon request at 951-358-5481.

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