



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is Oct. 25-31

Keep keiki safe from lead exposure

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is pleased to recognize [National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week](#), Oct. 25-31. DOH encourages healthcare providers and the public to learn more about the effects of lead exposure on children, the many possible sources of lead exposure, and the steps to reduce the risk of lead poisoning.

“In Hawai'i, one of out of every 100 tested children has an elevated blood lead level,” said Derek Priddy, coordinator, [Hawai'i Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#). “And only 25% of children are tested for lead at ages 1 and 2.”

Lead can be found inside and outside the home. However, the most common source of exposure is from lead paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. More than half of the homes in Hawai'i were built before 1980.

Children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in lead dust (especially during renovations, repairs or painting) or by swallowing lead dust that settles on food, counters, floors, windowsills and toys. Lead paint can also mix into the soil and get on a child's hands.

Children can also be exposed to lead dust from adults' jobs or hobbies like car repair, welding and plumbing. Another local activity that is especially dangerous for increasing lead exposure is the smelting of lead fishing sinkers.

Even small amounts of lead can make it hard for children to learn, pay attention and perform well in school, but a few simple steps can go a long way toward giving a child the best possible future.

- Wash hands with soap and water before eating and after playing outside. Hand sanitizer does not remove lead.
- Keep homes and childcare facilities free of lead dust with a HEPA vacuum and a wet mop. Regular vacuums and sweeping can spread lead dust.
- Keep children away from areas of peeling paint inside or outside a home.

- Talk to your child’s healthcare provider about a lead test at ages 1 and 2, or later if never tested before.

“Lead poisoning is one of the most overlooked threats to the health of our children,” said Deborah Zysman, executive director, [Hawai’i Children’s Action Network](#). “We’re grateful that the Department of Health is starting this important community conversation. Working together, we can protect our keiki from this completely preventable issue.”

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The goal is to empower families and other stakeholders to take action.

Learn more about protecting keiki from lead exposure with [handouts](#) and other resources at [Lead.Hawaii.Gov](#).

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