

TO: Vermont Health Care Professionals

FROM: Mark Levine, MD, Health Commissioner

Health Department Now Defines *Any* Level of Lead in the Body as Elevated

Any Reported Blood Lead Level is Elevated

Vermont has lowered its definition of an elevated blood lead result from 5 µg/dL to any reported level. Research highlights that there is no safe level of lead and levels **at and below 5 µg/dL** still impair development. Therefore, *any* level of lead in the blood is considered elevated. Lead is not naturally occurring in the body, and there is no safe level. It is inappropriate to refer to a blood lead level as normal, no matter how low the level is.

Lead poisoning remains a serious threat for children in Vermont. Last year alone, there were 420 children with a blood lead level greater than or equal to 5 µg/dL - micrograms per deciliter.

New Handout Required by Vermont Regulation

Continue to follow the [Pediatric Blood Lead Testing & Case Management Guidelines](#), which outline State law and regulations. The guidelines have been updated and there are two new requirements for health care professionals:

- Give the Health Department's [What Your Child's Lead Test Means](#) to ALL parents or guardians of children when they are being tested for lead, regardless of the test results. **This is a new requirement effective September 1, 2020.**
- Educate families on potential sources of lead and ways to reduce or remove exposure, even at low levels that do not require a venous confirmation.

The Health Department will continue to offer environmental investigations (home visits) to find lead hazards for all confirmed blood lead levels at or above 5 µg/dL (confirmed means venous blood draw).

Lead Care II Users Must Report at Least Twice per Month Using GlobalScape

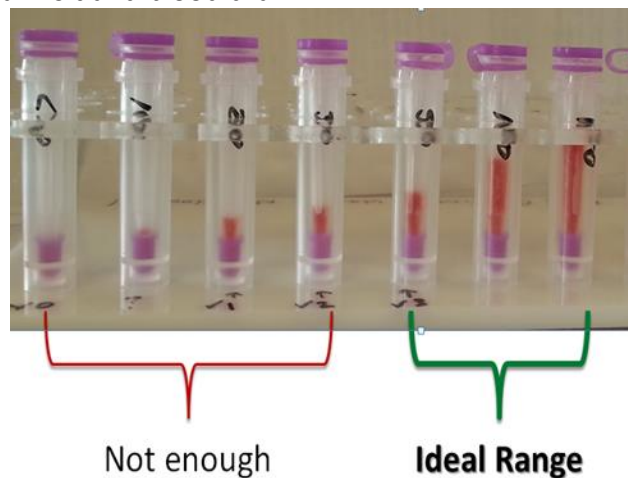
All health care professionals who use their own point-of-care machine (i.e. Lead Care II machine) to analyze blood samples must report all required information using GlobalScape, a secure, web-based file transfer platform on the 1st and 15th of every month. Blood lead levels at or above 45 µg/dL must be reported by phone to the Health Department within 24 hours.

This is required by law.

Health Department Laboratory Lowered the Reporting Limit

In response to Vermont's position that there is no safe level of lead in the blood, the Health Department Laboratory has lowered the blood lead reporting limit. Health care professionals will now receive results below the previous reporting level of 5 µg/dL. Results below 3 µg/dL will be reported as "< 3 µg/dL."

In order to meet the lower reporting limit, it's important that health care professionals obtain a sufficient volume of blood in the sample. The Microvette® tube should be filled half full to receive an accurate result. Samples with insufficient volume may not be analyzed and therefore will require an additional visit and blood draw.



While some testing at the Health Department Laboratory has been temporarily suspended due to COVID-19 testing demands, blood lead testing is essential and will continue.

Questions – Call or email the Environmental Health Division at 1-800-439-8550 AHS.HealthyHomes@vermont.gov for with questions.

Resources:

[Pediatric Blood Lead Testing & Case Management Guidelines](#)

[What Your Child's Lead Test Means](#)

[Lead Poisoning Prevention Fact Sheet Website](#)

HAN Message Type Definitions

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service Message: Provides general correspondence from VDH, which is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.