



# Health Spotlight

## May 2006



### MAY IS LEAD POISONING AWARENESS MONTH

Did you know that lead poisoning is the single most preventable childhood disease, but one out of seven children in Iowa is lead poisoned? Between July 1, 2004-June 4, 2005, Scott County providers performed 3,574 blood lead tests on children six years of age or younger. Of those tested, 94.8% fell within an acceptable range and 5.2% fell into harmful blood lead levels.



### Why is Lead Poisoning so Dangerous?



Lead poisoning can damage the kidneys, nervous system, and the brain. It can cause permanent brain damage and even death. Symptoms of lead poisoning may include tiredness, sleeplessness, stomachache, and vomiting.

### Where Can Children Be Tested For Lead?

In Scott County there are various sites where children can have their blood lead levels tested. These sites include private physicians' offices, Community Health Care, Inc, and the Scott County Health Department. Between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005, private physician offices performed 69.1% of the blood lead tests in the county.



### What Happens if a Child Tests High For Lead?



The children identified with blood lead levels greater than or equal to 10 micrograms per deciliter receive medical case management services as appropriate for the blood lead level. Medical case management can involve follow-up testing, home visits, education, referrals for nutrition education and development assessment, and physician referrals for appropriate treatment.

### Who Conducts Lead Inspections?

Elevated blood lead inspections are conducted by certified elevated blood lead (EBL) inspectors/risk assessors. There are Environmental Health Specialists certified to conduct lead inspection. If lead hazards are found, the owner/landlord is advised about what needs to be done to remediate the problem. Follow-up inspections are done to assure the lead hazards have been removed.



## SOURCES OF LEAD POISONING:

### **Major Source—Deteriorated Paint**

The major source of lead exposure is the result of deteriorated paint in older homes and the dust and soil that is contaminated with lead from old paint and from past emissions of leaded gasoline.

## LEAD FOUND IN SOME HERBAL REMEDIES:

### **Hmong-Vietnamese Herbal Remedy**

*Pay-loo-ah*—a red powder given for a rash or fever.

### **Asian-Indian Herbal Remedies**

*Ghasard*—a brown powder given for indigestion

*Bala Goli*—a round, flat black bean dissolved in “gripe water” and used for a stomachache



*Kandu*—a red powder used to treat stomachache

### **Arab-American Herbal Remedies**

*Kohl (Alkohl)*—a powder used both as a cosmetic eye make-up and applied to skin infections and the naval of a newborn child

### **Hispanic Herbal Remedies**

*Azarcon*—a bright, orange powder given for intestinal illness—also known as Rueda, Coral, Maria Luisa, Alarcon, or Liga

*Greta*—a yellow powder given for intestinal illness

### **Chinese Herbal Remedies**

*Ba-baw-san*—Chinese herbal remedy used to treat colic pain or pacify young children

#### Sources

American Girl:  
<http://www.americangirl.com/recall/>  
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention:  
<http://www.cdc.gov>  
Center for Environmental Health:  
<http://www.cehca.org>  
Iowa Department of Public Health:  
<http://www.idph.state.ia.us>  
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:  
<http://www.cpsc.gov>  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:  
<http://www.epa.gov/lead>  
The Orange County Register:  
<http://www.ocregister.com>

## OTHER KNOWN SOURCES OF LEAD POISONING:

### **Jewelry**

*Reebok Bracelet*—Reebok recently recalled 300,000 eight-inch-long metal promotional bracelets that have a heart-shaped charm with the name “Reebok” engraved on one side after a child in the U.S. died of lead poisoning after reportedly swallowing the bracelet.



*American Girl*—American Girl Stores recently recalled certain necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and hair accessories for girls after they were identified as containing high levels of lead.



### **Toys**

*Dollar Tree Toys*—The following products were recently recalled from Dollar Tree Stores since they contained high levels of lead: Mood Necklace and Ring, Glow-in-the Dark Necklace and Ring, and UV Necklace and Ring.



### **Lunchboxes**

*Vinyl Lunchboxes*—The Center for Environmental Health purchased and tested over 150 soft lunchboxes and found that approximately 10% of them contained high levels of lead. They recommend avoiding vinyl lunchboxes altogether since it is difficult to identify which ones contain lead by looking at them.



### **Candy**

*Candy from Mexico*—112 distinct brands of candy, most of them made in Mexico, were found to have high levels of lead.



*Margarita Dulce de Tamarindo*