

**From:** NYC Health Department Press Office

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**To:** NYC Health Department Press Office <[pressoffice@health.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@health.nyc.gov)>

**Subject:** HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES DATA ON BLOOD LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN SHOWING A 13 PERCENT DECLINE FROM 2016 TO 2017



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**  
Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Thursday, May 10, 2018**  
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**HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES DATA ON BLOOD  
LEAD LEVELS IN CHILDREN SHOWING  
A 13 PERCENT DECLINE FROM 2016 TO 2017**

*Data show continued progress in reducing elevated blood lead levels in children*

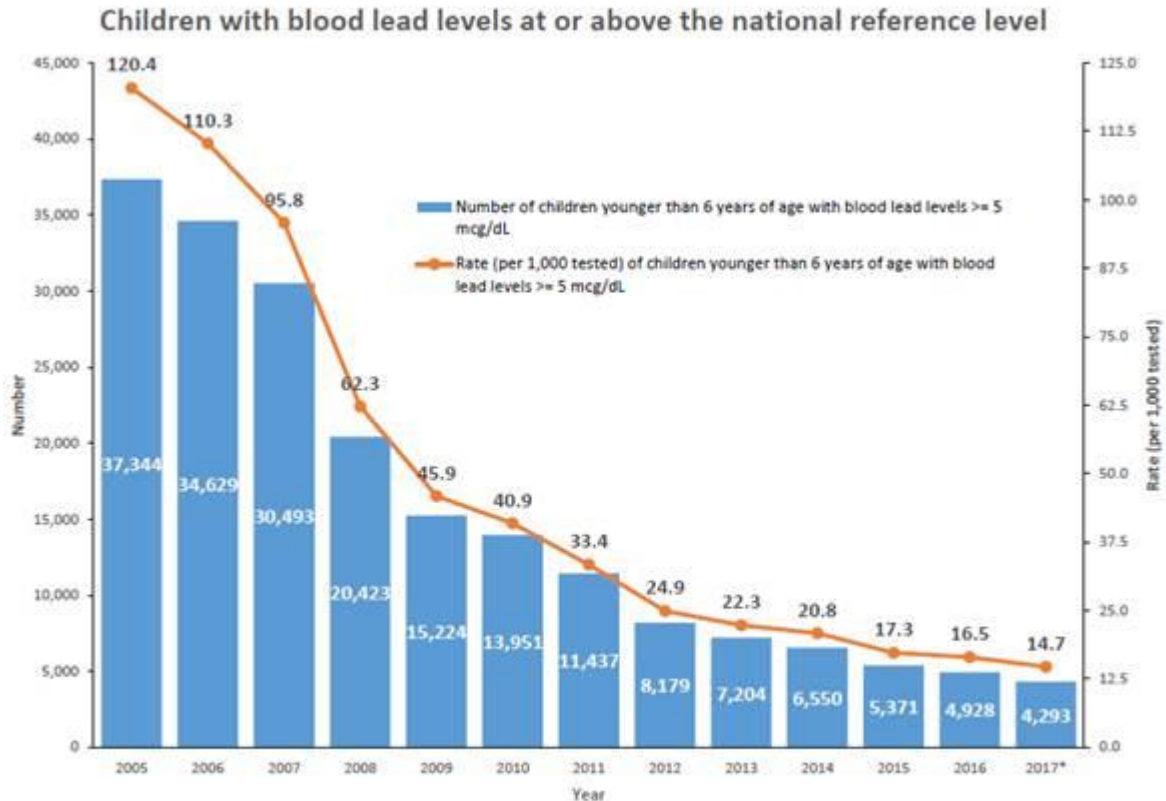
*More than 80 percent of New York City children are tested  
for lead at least once before their third birthday; more than 90 percent  
of New York City children have had a blood lead test by age 6*

**May 10, 2018** – The Health Department today released preliminary data on lead poisoning in children, showing a 13 percent decrease from 2016 to 2017 in the number of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reference level of 5mcg/dL. This decline builds on New York City’s significant progress in reducing childhood lead poisoning. Since 2005, the City has seen an 89 percent reduction in the number of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above 5 mcg/dL. This result is a testament to the city’s Local Law 1, the New York City Health Code, and the strong lead poisoning prevention policies and programs the Health Department has in place. Lead paint is the most common source of lead exposure for children in New York City. The Health Code defines lead poisoning as a blood lead level of 10 mcg/dL or greater; however, interventions begin at blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater.

“The City has been at the vanguard of addressing child lead poisoning concerns, which began when the Board of Health banned lead in paint in 1960 – 18 years before the federal ban,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. “New York City continues to make tremendous progress in reducing childhood lead poisoning in children with blood lead levels at or above 5 mcg/dL for children under age 6. As we move forward, we will continue this significant progress.”

Preliminary data from 2017 shows:

- The number of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above CDC reference level of 5mcg/dL declined 13 percent (from 4,928 to 4,293 children).
- The rate of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above CDC reference level of 5mcg/dL declined 11 percent (from 16.5 to 14.7 per 1,000 children tested).



\*Note: 2017 data are preliminary. Number and rate (per 1,000 tested) of children younger than 6 years of age with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, 2005-2017. Source: New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Childhood Blood Lead Registry.

**Figure above: Children with BLL at or above national reference level (5mcg/dl)**

New York State law requires all children to be tested for lead at ages 1 and 2, and children up to age 6 to be tested if they are found to be at risk. New York City law also requires blood lead testing of children under age 6 who are enrolled in child care.

New York City has one of the highest testing rates in the state – more than 80 percent of New York City children are tested at least once before their third birthday. The Health Department collaborates with Medicaid Managed Care Plan to improve testing and do annual reminders to health care providers.

The Health Department, through its Healthy Homes Program, has developed a comprehensive and proactive approach to childhood lead poisoning prevention and control, which includes:

- Lead hazard reduction in homes and communities.
- Education and outreach to families and health care providers to promote prevention and early detection.
- Care coordination for children with lead poisoning and pregnant women with lead poisoning and their newborns.
- Environmental investigation and enforcement.
- Surveillance and research.

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