



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT RELEASES LEAD SURVEILLANCE REPORT FOR QUARTERS 1 THROUGH 3 OF 2019

Since 2013, there has been a 65% decrease in the number of New York City children under 6 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater

January 29, 2020 – The Health Department today released its latest [Childhood Blood Lead Level Surveillance Quarterly Report](#) (PDF) covering the first, second and third quarters of 2019. From January to September 2019, New York City children younger than 18 years were tested for lead exposure. Of all children tested, 3,097 (1.1%) had a blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL) or higher. Among these children with elevated blood lead levels, 2,529 were younger than 6, and 76 were associated with public housing. This represents a decline of 17% among children under 6 citywide and 14% among children who lived or spent time in NYCHA housing compared to the same period in 2018.

“Opportunities remain to protect our children and prevent lead exposures,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot**. “If you have a child under age 3, be sure to get their blood lead level tested by their pediatrician. And, if you have peeling or damaged paint in your home that your landlord has not fixed, we urge you to call 311 so it can be addressed.”

Launched in August 2018, this quarterly report is an initiative of the Health Department and complements the [City’s annual blood lead level surveillance report](#) (PDF). In July 2018, the City announced more stringent measures to reduce childhood lead exposure and became one of the first jurisdictions in the country to conduct environmental investigations for all children under 18 years old with a blood lead level of 5 micrograms per deciliter or greater. Mayor de Blasio also announced in January this year the [LeadFreeNYC](#) plan, a comprehensive roadmap to end childhood lead exposure.

Quarterly Data Highlights

- The number and rate of children with elevated blood lead levels in New York City are at a historic low and continue to decline. Since 2005 we have seen a nearly 90% decrease in the number of children under 18 years with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater. From January to March 2019, there were 1,135 children under age 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 12% reduction compared to 1,289 children during the same time period in 2018.

- From April to June 2019, there were 934 children under age 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 19% reduction compared to 1,152 children during the same time period in 2018.
- From July to September, there were 1,028 children under 18 with blood lead levels of 5 mcg/dL or greater, a 21% reduction compared to 1,294 children during the same time period in 2018.
- Between January and September 2019, the rate of children less than 6 years of age with elevated blood lead levels associated with private housing was 11.4 per 1,000 tested, down from 14.1 per 1,000 tested in 2018. For children associated with public housing, the rate was 5.4 per 1,000 tested, down from 6.2 per 1,000 tested in 2018.

About LeadFreeNYC

In January 2019, Mayor de Blasio announced the LeadFreeNYC plan. The approach is twofold: prevent exposure to lead hazards in the first place and respond quickly and comprehensively if a child has an elevated blood lead level. To protect New York City children, the City will increase resources and support for children, parents, and health care providers to make sure every child under 3 is tested for lead exposure – and any child who has elevated blood lead gets the services they need. A new website, [LeadFreeNYC](#), provides information and guidance for parents, tenants, landlords, and all New Yorkers. The website includes data and progress on the City’s lead prevention initiatives and includes educational materials to help New Yorkers understand the dangers of the lead and the tools available to anyone who may have been exposed to lead.

Lead poisoning is preventable. Avoid exposure.

- Building owners are required to safely fix peeling paint. Report peeling or damaged paint to your building owner. If they do not fix the paint, you can [report them online](#) (nyc.gov/311) or by calling 311.
- Keep children away from peeling paint and renovations.
- Wash floors and window sills often. Wash hands and toys of children under 6.
- Remove shoes before entering your home.
- If someone in your household works in construction, wash work clothes separately from the family laundry.
- Avoid using imported products that may contain lead, such as certain spices, traditional medicines, cosmetics, pottery and toys.
- Visit nyc.gov/lead.

Get your child tested.

A blood test is the only way to find out whether your child has an elevated blood lead level. In New York State, children must be tested for lead poisoning at ages 1 and 2 and screened for risk up to age 6. Ask your doctor about testing older children if you think they may have been exposed to lead. Pregnant women should be assessed for lead exposure at their first prenatal visit. Call 311 for help finding a doctor or clinic.

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