



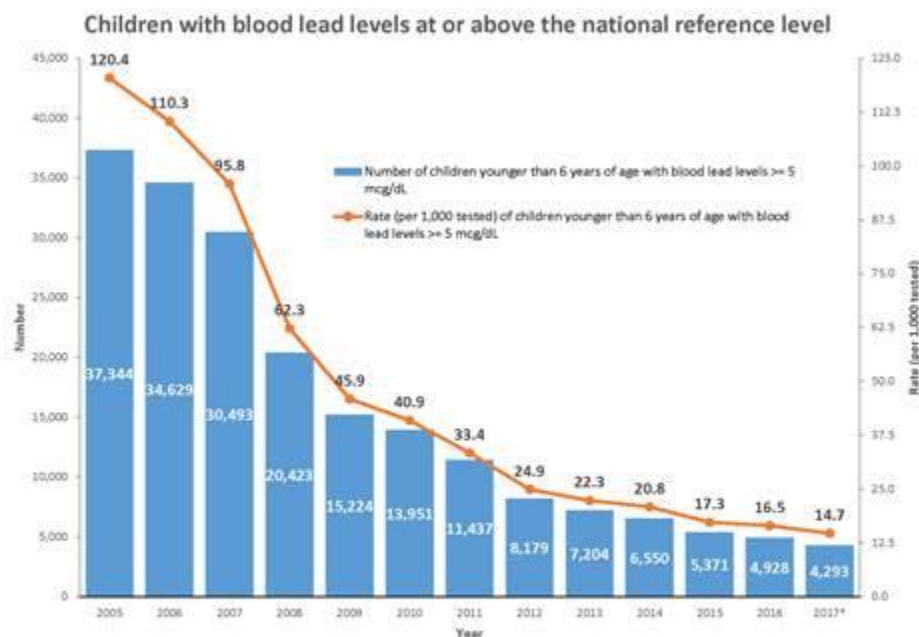
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO, SPEAKER JOHNSON AND NYC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
ANNOUNCE NEW MEASURES TO FURTHER REDUCE LEAD EXPOSURE**

*New York City will become one of the first jurisdictions in the country to conduct  
environmental investigations for all kids with a blood lead level of 5mcg/DL and above*

*Lead poisoning has gone down by nearly 90 percent since 2005*



\*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.

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Johnson and the NYC Department of Health today announced more stringent measures to reduce childhood lead exposure. New York City will become 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. The Health Department has already begun to conduct these investigations for children in public housing and will begin implementing beyond that by the end of the year. This new measure will significantly expand the City's robust lead prevention programs, which has already contributed to a nearly 90 percent reduction in the number of children under age 6 with blood lead level at or above 5 mcg/dL.

"Lead poisoning is down almost 90 percent since 2005. But that's not good enough. We've already made our testing protocols stricter for kids in public housing and we are now extending that standard to the entire City. It's our job to always push the envelope when it comes to our kids' health," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

"Nearly 4,300 children a year test positive for high amounts of lead in their system in 2017, which is 4,300 too many. This expansion of the investigation program by the Health Department follows the introduction of City Council legislation aimed at revamping the city's current lead laws to make children safer, including lowering the threshold for intervention by the city to align with the Centers for Disease Control standard of 5 micrograms per deciliter (µg/dL). These measures, along with strict enforcement of existing laws, will help bring the number of children with high lead levels in the city down to the ultimate goal of zero," said **City Council Speaker Corey Johnson**.

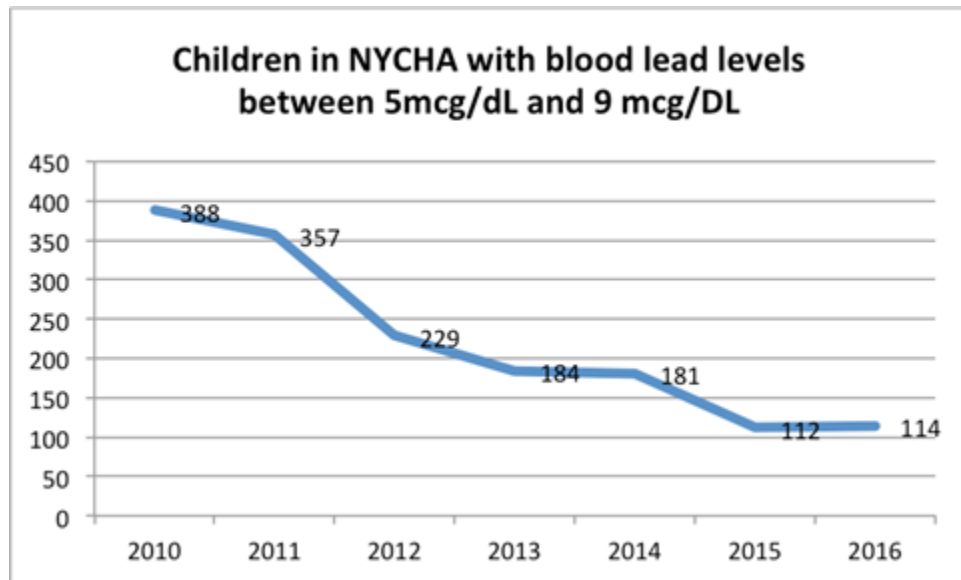
"New York City has been at the forefront of protecting children from lead exposure through the implementation of strong laws, policies and programs, and this next step will ensure that our progress continues," said **Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. "This new policy builds upon the Health Department's comprehensive lead prevention services to children and their families."

"New York City has long been at the vanguard of protecting children from lead poisoning, and we have made tremendous progress in reducing childhood lead poisoning. This significant expansion of our work will enable the Health Department to reach even more children with elevated blood lead levels," said **Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett**. "Expanding our environmental investigations to address children with lower blood lead levels will allow us to reduce disparities and reduce the risk of lead poisoning for many more children."

New York City already has one of the most robust lead poisoning prevention programs in the country. The Health Department reviews results of blood lead tests every day, and contacts the family of every child who has an elevated blood lead level. DOH is mandated to conduct environmental investigations for all children under 18 years old with a BLL of 15mcg or above, but also performs inspections for younger children with lower blood lead levels. During these environmental investigations, a Health Department investigator interviews a family and inspects a child's home to determine possible sources of lead exposure, which can include lead-tainted cooking ware or toys, peeling paint, food products or contamination from a parent's place of work.

Currently, the families of children with a BLL of 5 mcg/dL and their health care providers receive guidance from the Health Department on how to reduce exposure. With this program expansion, these families will receive an environmental investigation. This expansion will be implemented as a policy change and further codified by City Council legislation.

The Health Department has already begun conducting these investigations for children under 6 years old who reside in public housing and have a blood lead level at or above 5 mcg/dL. There has been a nearly 70 percent decrease in the number of children in public housing with blood lead levels at 5 mcg/dL and up.



With this newly expanded program, the Health Department will now visit the home of all children under the age of 18 with blood levels of 5 mcg/dL and above to help identify possible sources of lead exposure. If a lead paint hazard is found during the investigation, the Health Department issues a Commissioner's Order to Abate, directing the property owner to fix the hazard.

Following a City Council-led overhaul of the city's lead laws, New York City has seen an 89 percent reduction in the number of children under age 6 with blood lead level at or above 5 µg/dL since 2005. To reduce these rates even further, the City Council has introduced a package of 23 bills earlier this year to expand and strengthen New York's existing lead laws, which is the biggest proposed overhaul of these laws since their original passage.

Preliminary data on lead poisoning in children show that between 2016 and 2017 there was a 13 percent drop in the number of children under age 6 with blood lead levels at or above 5 mcg/dL, from 4,928 to 4,293.

### **NYC DOH HEALTHY HOME TIPS:**

The Health Department's Healthy Homes Programs recommends the following tips to parents and caregivers on how to protect children from lead exposure:

- Keep children away from peeling paint and home repairs that disturb paint.

- Report peeling paint to your building management. Building owners are required to safely fix peeling paint in homes where young children live. If repairs aren't made, call 311.
- Remind your health care provider to test children for lead poisoning at one and two years of age—it's required by law. Ask about testing older children who may be at risk of lead exposure. All families can receive free lead testing at any NYC Health + Hospital location.
- Wash floors, window sills, hands, toys and pacifiers often to remove lead dust that may be present in the home.
- Use safe work methods to reduce dust when doing home repairs that disturb paint. For information on lead-safe work methods, call 311.
- Avoid using imported foods, spices, medicines, pots, dishes, cosmetics or toys known to contain lead.
- Use only tap water for baby formula, drinking and cooking. Run the water for 30 seconds first thing in the morning to remove water sitting in pipes overnight.

For more information on preventing childhood lead poisoning, call 311 or visit [www.nyc.gov/lead](http://www.nyc.gov/lead).

**Council Member Alicka Ampry-Samuel** said: "I am proud to be a member of the New York City Council when we are working extremely hard to protect the most vulnerable residents of our city. Today as Speaker Johnson and Mayor de Blasio announce policy changes that will lead to reductions in elevated blood lead levels I look forward to the passage of my bill that addresses the remediation of lead levels in water in city dwellings. Although NYC is progressive in policies to protect our children, we have fallen short in protecting our children in public housing, but this announcement is not only a game changer but a true sense of putting New Yorker's first."

"Young children are exquisitely sensitive to lead. Even the lowest levels of lead in blood can cause lasting damage to infants and children that lowers their IQ, shortens their attention span and causes problems with conduct and behavior. This is why it is so important that Mayor de Blasio, Commissioner Mary Bassett and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene have lowered the intervention level for blood lead level to 5 mcg/dL and expanded home investigations to detect lead sources. Thousands of New York City's children, now and in future generations will benefit from this bold and courageous action," said **Dr. Philip Landrigan, Dean Emeritus for Global Health at Mount Sinai Icahn School of Medicine**.

"The leadership of New York City and the Department of Health and Mental Health is proposing to take an important step forward in the care of lead poisoned children. By lowering the threshold for performing environmental evaluations to a blood lead level of 5 ug/dL many more children will be eligible to receive this essential component of treatment. Identifying and permanently eliminating sources of exposure helps protect the lead poisoned child from further harm and ensures that no other children will be harmed from those sources," said **Dr. Morri Markowitz, MD, Director of Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore**.

"The National Center for Healthy Housing believes this new effort to identify and help children with high blood lead levels is an important step forward to protect the children of New York City

from lead poisoning--an entirely preventable disease--while also preserving affordable housing," said **Amanda Reddy, Executive Director of the National Center for Healthy Housing.**

“ As a longtime advocate for strong lead poisoning prevention policies, WE ACT applauds the initiative underway by the city and the NYC Council to provide intervention and greater support to children with blood lead levels at the CDC level of 5 mcg/dl. Science documents that no level of lead exposure is safe for children under the age of 6 as their brains and bodies are still developing. This initiative is overdue and necessary, and it will only be effective if Local Law 1 of 2004 is enforced by the city,” said **Peggy Shepard, Executive Director of WE ACT For Environmental Justice.**

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