

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Data Watch: Maryland Department of the Environment Releases 2006 Lead Poisoning Data

(Baltimore, MD, June 20, 2007)-The Maryland Department of the Environment is reporting today that in 2006, 843 children or 4.6% of 18,363 children tested were identified with lead levels above 10 micrograms per deciliter in Baltimore City. This is down from 854 children or 4.8% of 17,943 children tested in 2005.

Since 1995, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels ($\geq 10\mu\text{g/dL}$) has fallen from 10,258 to 843 in 2006 in Baltimore – a decrease of 92% (Table).

In 2006, 69 children in Baltimore City were identified with venous lead levels over 20 micrograms per deciliter. This represents a 1% decrease from 70 children in 2005.

“Baltimore is making progress, but we must do more to reach the goal of eliminating lead poisoning by 2010,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “We must accelerate our efforts aimed at preventing lead poisoning.”

Table. Number and percentage of children aged 0-72 months whose blood lead test results were equal to or greater than $10\mu\text{g/dL}$ in the City of Baltimore: 1998 - 2006*

Year	$\geq 10\mu\text{g/dl}$	
	#	%
1998	3949	22.2
1999	2902	16.7
2000	2189	12.1
2001	2027	9.5
2002	1558	9.4
2003	1166	6.4
2004	1183	6.2
2005	854	4.8
2006	843	4.6

The Baltimore City Health Department – together with State, local, and national partners – has recently launched two new efforts to prevent residential lead poisoning:

- **The Home Visitor’s Primary Prevention Initiative:** The Baltimore City Health Department has provided lead poisoning prevention training to home visitors and health care workers that serve pregnant and post-partum high-risk, low-income mothers. These health care workers provide a preliminary assessment of housing quality and link their clients to legal, education, and housing resources before children are poisoned.

* Criteria: Highest venous or in the absence of a venous, capillary test. Childhood Lead Registry, Maryland Department of the Environment, Supplement II.

- **Housing referral initiative:** The Baltimore City Health Department, Baltimore Housing Department and Maryland Department of the Environment work together so that when city housing inspectors identify chipping, peeling paint in rental property, they trigger legal enforcement of state law on lead paint hazards. This enforcement happens before a child is poisoned.

The Health Department is committed to working with partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and such community partners as the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, to assess the progress of our efforts and adjust strategies as needed.

“We applaud all the work of parents, community organizations, health care providers, and property owners who have come together to fight lead poisoning,” said Madeleine Shea, Assistant Commissioner for Healthy Homes. “While lead poisoning has declined tremendously over the last decade in Baltimore, it is still a threat.”

Acute lead poisoning can cause abdominal pain, mental changes, and even death at high doses. Chronic lead poisoning can cause cognitive impairment and behavioral changes.

The Baltimore City Health Department offers FREE lead testing at 312 N. Charles St, 2nd floor on Tuesdays from 1:00 pm—3:00 pm and on Thursdays from 9:00 am—12:00 pm.

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