

# H. E. L. P.

## Help Eliminate Lead Poisoning

*A community awareness program from Microecologies® Inc. © 1997*

### Lead Poisoning Facts:

- **1 of 9 U.S. children** and **1 of 3 inner-city children** has blood lead levels that the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) considers unsafe, making lead poisoning the no. 1 chronic childhood disease in America.
- **Each year 400,000 babies are born with lead poisoning** because their mothers had unsafe levels of lead in their bones and blood. During pregnancy, calcium stored in the mother's bones is released together with lead into her blood and then through the placenta into the fetus' developing blood and skeletal systems. Therefore, **all girls and women of child-bearing age face an additional risk.**
- Even at the CDC "safe" level of 10 micrograms of lead per 1/10 liter of blood (10ug/dL), **lead may cause neurological deficiencies that manifest as behavioral problems**, including irritability and attention span reduction. Lead is especially toxic to children age 6 and under because their high growth rate increases lead absorption and their defenses are immature. **Nutrient deficiencies cause increased lead absorption.** Lead is also toxic to adults causing hypertension and neurological, kidney, and reproductive system damage.
- **Lead poisoning reduces human potential.** At blood lead levels of 30-40 ug/dL, not uncommon among children in poorly maintained buildings, reduction in IQ scores of 5 to 10 points are documented. As blood lead levels increase, further intellectual impairment and behavioral problems can be expected. As blood lead levels decrease, as a result of exposure reduction and treatment, IQ scores increase.
- **Lead Poisoning is AVOIDABLE.** It usually occurs when hands, toys, and pacifiers touch lead-containing house dust or small paint chips and then touch the mouth, or when food is eaten with unwashed hands.
- All surfaces first painted before 1960 are presumed under NYC law to be painted with lead paint and are required to be maintained in intact condition. Abrasion from opening and closing windows and impact from slamming doors create lead dust. Flaking, peeling, and chalking paint create lead dust. **Window sills and wells are especially hazardous.** The NYC Dept. of Health (*Sec. 173.14*) requires the safe handling of lead hazards when repainting, repairing water damage, or replacing windows. Dry scraping and sanding are prohibited. Use of a HEPA filtered vacuum is required.
- Other common sources of lead exposure include tap water, contaminated soil, imported canned foods, painted toys and antiques, painted or glazed plates, bowls and mugs, lead crystal, and folk remedies.

### Lead Poisoning Solutions:

- **Prevention** by supporting community **risk awareness** and **exposure reduction** programs..
- **Prevention** through paint stabilization, window well re-surfacing, and use of approved abatement methods.
- **Prevention** by daily damp wiping of window sills, window wells, and paint chips - instead of vacuuming.
- **Prevention** by washing babies' and toddlers' hands frequently and teaching older children to do the same.
- **Prevention** by pre-pregnancy and pre-natal blood testing and counseling.
- **Prevention** by testing your tap water for lead for FREE by calling the NYC DEP at 1-718-699-9811.
- **Prevention** by identifying lead hazards with an easy-to-use screening test or by a certified lead inspector.
- **Prevention and Early Detection** by neonatal and annual blood testing of all babies and children.
- **Prevention** by improving nutrition to reduce lead absorption: more milk, orange juice, and green vegetables.
- **Treatment** by a physician with an oral medication, called chelation, for moderate to severe lead poisoning.

For more information or to find out how you can **H.E.L.P.** please call Bill Sothern at **212-755-3265**

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