ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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"PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY"

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Oneida County Recognizes National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

Awareness Campaign Takes Place October 23-29

The Oneida County Health Department is raising awareness of lead poisoning during this National Lead Poisoning Prevention week.

Lead poisoning in children is preventable yet continues to happen. No level of lead is safe, but at 5 micrograms or higher, this is a serious concern for the health of the child and action is required to provide services to the child and family. Children with elevated blood lead levels (BLL) may have learning and behavioral difficulties, attentional issues and their overall growth and development may be affected.

In April 2019, New York State recognized that evidence shows that exposure to even small amounts of lead may contribute to behavioral problems, learning disabilities, and lowered intelligence scores and amended public health law to lower the State standard for elevated BLLs from 15 µg/dL to 5 µg/dL.

A child with a blood lead level of 5 µg/dL or higher requires case management and a full-scale environmental lead investigation of the home by the Oneida County Health Department. In 2021, the Health Department worked with182 children with elevated blood lead levels and their families. Once a child has been identified as having elevated BLL, the health department meets with and provides education and resources to the family, works with medical providers and completes a full inspection of the home, both inside and outside. Homeowners are required to make timely repairs to fix the lead dangers that are present at the home.

Lead is found in many places including soil, paint, toys, food, makeup and other consumer products, as some examples. Children younger than 6 years-old are more likely to be exposed to lead dust as they are more likely to put things in their mouth. There are things parents can do to help. If you live in a home built before 1978, you should assume that the paint is lead based. Make sure there are no cracks or peeling in the paint and if you plan renovations, you should seek a certified lead contractor. Wash your child's hands frequently and keep windows, floors and play areas clean and dust free. In addition, have your child tested. Healthy, nutritious foods also help protect children from lead especially foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C. Every child in New York State is required to be tested for lead poisoning at ages one and two years old.

"The effects of lead poisoning are negative and can be permanent," said Daniel W. Gilmore, Ph.D., MPH, Director of Health. "Prevention is key. Educating the public about the dangers of lead is crucial."

The Oneida County Health Department offers prevention education through community presentations, distribution of educational materials and being available to answer questions. If you would like to learn more about the dangers of lead, visit https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm. Call the Oneida County Health Department at 315-798-5064 with questions or for additional information and resources, visit https://ocgov.net/health/leadrecall.