



ONEIDA COUNTY
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Oneida County Releases Lead Poisoning Documentary *Stoplead.org Set Up as Resource Center*

Oneida County has released a documentary highlighting the far-reaching and permanent effects of lead poisoning, calling the disease “the perfect predator” because it is silent, pervasive and right here in our local community.

The documentary can be viewed at the county’s new online resource center www.stoplead.org, which provides a wide range of information on lead poisoning prevention for residents, homeowners and contractors.

“Oneida County has gone to great lengths over the years to battle the silent killer that is lead poisoning,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. “With several older homes in our community, a potential danger to our children lurks around many corners. This documentary and online resource guide are great tools for raising awareness of lead poisoning and for further assisting our efforts to fight it.”

“The Perfect Predator” documentary highlights stories from families that have personally experienced lead poisoning and was produced under the leadership of County Executive Picente. It was developed in partnership with the Oneida County Health Department, the New York State Department of Health, Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County, Tompkins County Public Health, Steuben County Public Health and Excellus Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The highest risk of lead is in windows of homes built before 1978. The older the home, the more likely it is to have lead-based paint. Children can become lead poisoned by swallowing or breathing in lead dust that often can’t be seen. Pets can track lead dust into homes, increasing lead risks for families and causing pets to experience symptoms of lead poisoning as well.

The damaging effects of lead are devastating and permanent, and they vary depending on the level of lead exposure. They can include:

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- Permanent brain damage
- Slow growth
- Hearing problems
- Lower IQ scores
- Problems learning
- Excitability
- Problems concentrating
- Clumsiness
- Weakness
- Loss of recently learned skills
- Coma
- Convulsions
- Death

All 1- and 2-year-old children are required by the State of New York to be tested for lead poisoning. Since 2011, Oneida County has been successful in increasing childhood lead testing rates by 20 percent and decreasing the incidence of children whose lead levels were a concern by 27 percent. Two-thirds of the county's 1- and 2-year-olds are currently being tested, according to New York State Health Department data.

“The only way to know if your child is lead poisoned is by getting a blood test,” said Oneida County Director of Health Phyllis D. Ellis, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E. “It is important to know the potential sources of lead, and to reach out for assistance if you are concerned about lead in your home or testing your child for lead.”

The Oneida County Health Department, in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County, provides home assessments for lead paint hazards, offers lead poisoning prevention and nutrition education to families needing services, and provides lead education to community organizations. Through the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, the agencies also provide blood level testing in certain cases to children in target areas, as well as medical and environmental follow-up.

“In addition to paint, lead can be found in other items around the home, like food, spices, dishes, toys and jewelry,” said Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director Mary Beth McEwen. “We continue to work hand-in-hand with the Oneida County Health Department to educate residents on the dangers of lead and to minimize the effects of lead poisoning on our community.”

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Some ways residents can help prevent lead poisoning are to:

- Wash children's hands and toys often.
- Mop floors often and use damp cloths to clean window areas.
- Keep older homes in good repair.
- Ask about lead before you rent or buy a home.
- Avoid traditional medicines, herbs, spices and cosmetics from other countries.
- Use extra caution with jobs or hobbies that involve working with lead such as building restoration, plumbing, stained glass work, lead bullets, lead fishing sinkers, some craft paint, some pottery glaze and lead solder.
- Keep lead out of your food by letting tap water run for one minute before using it and only using cold tap water for drinking, cooking and preparing infant formula.
- Use lead-free dishes and pots.
- Serve foods rich in calcium, iron and vitamin C.

Any organization or community group that would like to show "The Perfect Predator" should contact the Oneida County Health Department at (315) 798-5064.