

Understanding Your Child's Blood Lead Level



"Blood lead level" (BLL) means the amount of lead found in your child's blood. It is measured in micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$). There is no safe blood lead level. Use the table below to learn what your child's blood lead level means, and what next steps to expect after a blood lead test.

It is important to monitor your child's BLL. If your child's BLL is **3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or higher**, schedule a follow-up blood lead test.

Blood Lead Level	Next Steps
< 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is not a lot of lead in your child's blood. Check your home for possible sources of lead and safely remove them. Talk to your doctor about re-testing your child if something changes in their environment that may expose them to lead.
3.5 - 9.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is some lead in your child's blood. Your doctor will educate you on possible sources of lead and tips for preventing future exposure. Check your home for sources of lead and safely remove them.
10 - 19 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child's blood lead level is very high. Someone from your local health department will talk to you about the possible source of the exposure, tips for safely removing the exposure source, and educate you on preventing future exposure.
20 - 44 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child's blood lead level is very high. Someone from your local health department may come to your home to check for possible sources of lead and talk to you about safely removing them.
45 - 69 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child's blood lead level is extremely high. Your doctor will coordinate with your local health department to determine the need for immediate medical treatment. Your child should not go back to the home until the source of lead is identified and safely removed.
70+ $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your child needs immediate medical treatment. Your child should not go back to the home until the source of lead is identified and safely removed.

What should I do after my child's blood lead test?

If your child's blood lead level is 3.5 µg/dL or higher, make sure your child receives a follow-up blood lead test. This follow-up test will let you know if your child's blood lead level is decreasing. Between your child's initial blood lead test and their follow-up blood lead test, there are some things you can do around your home to reduce the risk of future lead exposure:

- Wet-wipe and wet-mop around windowsills and home entrances
- Take off shoes before entering the house
- Wash children's hands and toys regularly
- Do not let children play in bare soil. If they do, immediately wash their hands and clothes
- Run water for 60 seconds before use and cook with cold water only
- Cook nutrient dense meals, high in calcium, iron, and vitamin C

How long will it take for my child's blood lead level to drop?

How long it takes for a blood lead level to decrease can depend on many things, including:

- Child's age and weight
- Nutritional status
- Source of lead exposure
- Length of time the child was exposed
- How high the blood lead level is
- Where the lead is stored in the body (soft tissue, bone, blood)
- Other underlying health conditions

If a child has been exposed to lead, it is important to figure out where the lead is coming from. Once the child is no longer exposed to the source of lead, their blood lead level will start to drop.

When should my child get re-tested (based on their blood lead level)?

3.5 - 9.9 µg/dL: Within 3 months

10 - 19 µg/dL: Within 1 - 3 months

20 - 44 µg/dL: Within 2 weeks - 1 month

≥45 µg/dL: As soon as possible

This schedule is based on the first 2-4 tests after identification. Once the child's blood lead level starts to decline, follow-up testing may happen less frequently.



To learn more, visit
www.vdh.virginia.gov/leadsafe/

