



## **St. Lawrence County Public Health Department**

Jolene Munger, MPH, MA ▪ *Interim Public Health Director*  
80 State Highway 310, Suite 2 ▪ Canton, New York 13617-1476  
Phone: (315) 386-2325 ▪ Fax: (315) 386-2203

### **Press Release**

Date: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: 315-386-2325

### **National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 24th - October 30th**

**Canton, NY**—The St. Lawrence County Public Health Department is pleased to announce the kick-off of National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 24–30, 2021. Childhood lead poisoning is a growing concern in our communities as nearly 75% of homes in St. Lawrence County were built before lead-materials were banned and only a small fraction of our children are properly tested for lead.

Lead can be found inside and outside the home, including in the water that travels through lead pipes or in the soil around the house. The most common source of exposure for children is from lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in lead dust (especially during activities such as renovations, repairs, or painting) or by swallowing lead dust that settles in food, food preparation surfaces, floors, window sills, eating paint chips, soil that contains lead, or other places.

About 3.3 million American households, including 2.1 million low-income households, have children under 6 years of age who live in homes with lead exposure hazards. Children are particularly at risk, often becoming lead poisoned by putting their hands or other lead-contaminated objects in their mouths, eating paint chips found in homes from peeling or flaking lead-based paint, or playing in lead-contaminated soil. Even low levels of lead exposure can impair a child's cognitive development. Children with elevated blood lead levels can experience delayed growth and development, damage to the brain and nervous system, learning and behavior problems, and a host of other health-related problems. Public health actions are needed for these children. There is no safe blood lead level in children.

The good news is that the problem is largely preventable with increased education and testing. Children with lead levels above a 5µg/dL get placed in the St. Lawrence County Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. St. Lawrence County Public Health is in charge of care coordination; working with the families, and their provider to ensure the child is getting tested regularly, to provide education to the family on reducing the exposure to lead, and to follow their lead levels to make sure they are not increasing. The New York State Department of Health is responsible for environmental management – working with the family to discover where the lead may be coming from, and come up with a plan to make the home lead safe. Over the past two years, that has been made easier for some families due to a \$1 million Housing and Urban Development grant that was awarded to St. Lawrence County aimed at identifying and controlling lead-based paint hazards in eligible rented or privately owned homes.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week 2021 is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The goal is to encourage organized, local community events, and to empower families and other stakeholders to take action.

If you have questions, or would like more information on lead poisoning, please call the Public Health Department at 315-229-3433, and check out our website at:  
<https://www.stlawco.org/Departments/PublicHealth/LeadScreeningProgram>.

###