

Families Are Forever



LEAD POISONING PREVENTION INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & PROSPECTIVE PARENTS OF INTERNATIONALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN

Important information to safeguard the health of your child, during early medical exams in the U.S. The risk for lead exposure is higher in many countries from which children are adopted than in the United States. Sources of lead exposure vary by country. Concern exists about children adopted from overseas who may have been exposed in their home countries.

Risk of elevated blood-lead levels

There is no safe level of lead in the body. Often, symptoms are not obvious, so lead poisoning frequently goes unrecognized. At low levels, blood lead can cause health problems or behavioral or learning issues (4,5). In very extreme cases, it can cause seizures or death. A blood lead concentration at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter is currently considered high and requires monitoring or medical intervention.

Why should I be concerned?

Recently in the United States, a small number of internationally adopted children have been found to have elevated blood lead levels.

How do I know if my child was exposed to lead?

The only way to know for sure is to have your child tested with a simple blood test.

How can I have my child checked?

Request that your child's doctor perform a blood lead test during the child's medical examination in the U.S. or contact your state or local Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Contact information can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/programs.htm>

Who can I contact for more health information?

You can contact either your doctor or your local health department. Guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics inform doctors about the full medical checkup for internationally adopted children.

Additional Resources

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health, Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch
Search engine keywords: CDC lead poisoning prevention program

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Global Migration and Quarantine
Search engine keywords: CDC international adoption immigrant health

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Intercountry Adoption
Search engine keywords: child welfare information gateway intercountry adoption

U.S. Department of State
This site provides information and guidance to U.S. Citizens seeking information about international adoptions.
Search engine keywords: US Dept of State intercountry adoption from A to Z

This flyer can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips/adoptionflyer.pdf>