

NDDEQ Observes National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) wants to raise awareness about lead poisoning during National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Oct. 20-26, 2019.

“Lead is highly toxic and can cause adverse health effects in both children and adults,” said Sandi Washek, manager of the department’s Lead-based Paint Program. “Lead poisoning in children often goes unrecognized but can cause flu-like symptoms, learning and behavior problems, lower IQ, slowed growth, neurological problems and even death at very high levels.”

Preventing a child’s exposure to lead is crucial. The most common source is lead-based paint used in buildings before 1978. But lead can also be found in soil, dust brought home from a workplace, homeopathic medicines, certain types of plumbing, and even some older or imported toys.

Children spend most of their time at home and at school, and both environments can be potential sources of lead. Parents can reduce a child’s exposure in the home by taking the following steps.

- Understand the facts. Lead hazards must be identified and controlled or removed safely. For more information visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>.
- Get your home tested. Before you buy or remodel a pre-1978 home, ask for an inspection by a North Dakota-certified lead-based paint risk assessor or inspector. For a list of certified firms, see <https://deq.nd.gov/publications/WM/Lead/NDLIBLBP.pdf>.
- Hire an EPA-certified renovation, remodeling and painting general contractor to use lead-safe work practices on any renovation which may disturb known or assumed lead-based paint.
- Get your child tested by a health professional. Children 6 and younger are most at risk since this is the stage of greatest development and growth.
- Test your drinking water. Plumbing in some older homes, mainly built before 1930, may contain lead which could leach into drinking water. Learn more at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water>.

To help schools determine risk, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the NDDEQ have begun a voluntary assessment program. Visit <https://deq.nd.gov/LeadInSchools/default.aspx>.

For more information, contact:

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