



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Michael P. Hughes (716) 983-3731

HOSPITAL STATEMENT REGARDING LEAD IN DRINKING WATER

BUFFALO, N.Y. (October 25, 2016) – Melinda S. Cameron, MD, Medical Director, Western New York Lead Poisoning Prevention Resource Center at Women & Children's Hospital of Buffalo released the following statement today in an effort to help parents respond to reports of lead in schools' drinking water:

"In this region, lead paint chips and lead in household dust have been implicated as the major contributors to childhood lead exposure. The water testing reports from area schools identify specific sinks, faucets, and drinking fountains that supply water with a lead concentration that exceeds the EPA's action level of 15 parts per billion.

"However, the amount of exposure for each individual student is unknown. A student's exposure is influenced by how much and how often s/he drinks from the water sources in question and his/her body size. (The same dose of lead has a greater impact on someone of smaller size. Formula-fed infants exposed to lead in tap water are at the highest risk because they consume a large volume of formula relative to their body size.)

"In general, infants, young children, and pregnant women are more susceptible to the harmful effects of lead. "Parents should be aware of the test results in their individual schools and their child's potential exposure to lead in drinking water. Parents can obtain a copy of the test results for their children's schools from their school district.

"If parents are concerned that their children have been exposed to lead, they should consult with their health care provider to discuss the risk of exposure and whether a blood test is recommended. A blood lead test is the only way to measure a child's exposure to lead.

"Parents may want to take note of their school districts' plans for providing free, safe drinking water to school occupants in response to the test results."

More information for parents on lead in school drinking water is available at http://www.healthyschools.org/documents/Parent_Guide_to_Lead_in_School_Drinking_Water.pdf

More information on the effects of lead and lead poisoning prevention is available at <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>

###