



News from the Office of  
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

## NEWS RELEASE

### Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

October 18, 2012

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### National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week October 21-27, 2012

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#### *Lead-Free Kids for a Healthy Future*

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) is participating in National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week by sponsoring several activities to raise awareness about lead poisoning. “Childhood lead poisoning is considered the most preventable environmental disease among young children” **said Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein.** “The key is stopping children from coming into contact with lead and treating children who have been poisoned by lead. A simple blood test can prevent damage that will last a lifetime”. Several activities are scheduled to increase public awareness of available screening opportunities and lead poisoning prevention activities. **Commissioner Burstein will be making an Executive Proclamation regarding Lead Poisoning Prevention on October 18, 2012, 12:00 PM at 503 Kensington Ave.**

Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body, often over a period of months or years. Even small amounts of lead can cause serious health problems. Children under the age of 6 years are especially vulnerable to lead poisoning because they are growing so rapidly and because they tend to put their hands or other objects, which may be contaminated with lead dust, into their mouths. Lead poisoning can severely affect mental and physical development and at very high levels, can be fatal. Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust in older buildings are the most common sources of lead poisoning in children. Other sources include contaminated air, water and soil. Adults who work with batteries, home renovations or in auto repair shops also may be exposed to lead. While treatment is available for lead poisoning, some simple precautions can help prevent it.

- Testing paint and dust from your home for lead.

- Make sure your child does not have access to peeling paint or chewable surfaces painted with lead-based paint.
- Pregnant women and children should not be present in housing built before 1978 that is undergoing renovation.
- Create barriers between living/play areas and lead sources.
- Regularly wash children’s hands and toys.
- Regularly wet-mop floors and wet-wipe window components because household dust is a major source of lead
- Prevent children from playing in bare soil; if possible, provide them with sandboxes.

The Erie County Department of Health has three unique Lead Poisoning programs. The Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program responds to incidents of Elevated Blood Lead levels (EBLLs) in children, as reported by clinicians, and performs combinations of education, inspection and enforcement of hazard correction, and nurse case management. The Lead Primary Prevention Program proactively goes house-to-house in designated high risk areas testing homes for lead and orders correction of lead hazards by landlords and property owners before children are poisoned. Last, LEADSAFE Lead Hazard Control Program, a Federal HUD grant for low-income homes in Erie County with children under 6 year of age, pays for correction of lead hazards identified by testing, up to a maximum of \$15,000 per unit. Enrollment restrictions apply for this program.

Additionally, Erie County is sponsoring “Help Yourself to a Lead Safe Home” Classes. These classes are open to the public and will be held as follows:

- 10/22 – 3:30 – 8pm Table display with staff present, Riverside Library, 820 Tonawanda St., Buffalo
- 10/23 – 3:30pm University District Community Center, 995 Kensington Ave, Buffalo
- 10/23 – 6:30pm Old First Ward Community Center, 62 Republic Street, Buffalo
- 10/24 – 6:30pm Gloria Parks Community Center, 3242 Main Street, Buffalo
- 10/25 - 6:30 PM Clarence Public Library, 3 Town Place, Clarence
- 10/26 – 3:30pm Lt. Col. Matt Urban HOPE Center, 385 Paderewski Dr., Buffalo

To find out more about Erie County’s Lead Poisoning programs, contact:

**Lead Poisoning Prevention Programs:**

Erie County Department of Health  
 503 Kensington Avenue  
 Buffalo, NY 14214  
 (716) 961-6800  
[www.erie.gov/health](http://www.erie.gov/health)

Additional resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/>

New York State Department of Health

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/>