



## Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon  
71 Main Street, Building #1  
PO Box 2900  
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: November 18, 2019**

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### **Protecting Children from Lead Poisoning: A Year-Round Effort By Hunterdon County Health Department**

Protecting children from lead poisoning is a year-round effort by the Hunterdon County Department of Health's Public Health Nursing and Environmental Health Divisions, and is highlighted during national Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in October, Hunterdon County Freeholder Sue Soloway reported at the November 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Soloway, the Board's liaison for the Health Department, reported, "One of the ongoing goals of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention program is to raise awareness about the dangers of lead exposure. Our Health Department educates parents on how to protect children from the serious health effects of exposure, and the importance of testing children for lead.

A blood test is the best way to measure exposure to lead. It is recommended that children are tested twice before the age of 6, and children with increased lead levels in their blood are reported to the Health Department for investigation to prevent continued poisoning."

Soloway noted, "We are advised by our Public Health Nurses that there is no safe blood lead level in children. Even low levels of lead in blood have been shown to affect IQ, the ability to pay attention, and academic achievement.

But the good news is that childhood lead poisoning is 100% preventable through education and awareness."

According to the Environmental Health Division, 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 Division reports the most common source of exposure, however, is from lead-based paint, which was used in many homes built before 1978. There many older homes in Hunterdon County, and parents should be aware of the dangers, especially if any home renovation is planned.



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Adults and children can get lead into their bodies by breathing in the lead dust, especially during activities such as renovations, repairs or painting, or by swallowing lead dust that settles in food, on food preparation surfaces, floors, window sills, and other places, or eating paint chips or soil that contain lead.

Hunterdon County's Public Health Nurses provide case management and education, while Environmental Health Specialists investigate and test surfaces in the home and surroundings to determine the cause of lead poisoning.

The Health Department reported that in 2018, the program conducted 20 home visits to investigate lead poisoning.

Soloway said "The Health Department provides public education at the County Libraries and patient information at area physician offices. I believe all of the members of the Freeholder Board are most appreciative of these efforts by a staff dedicated to protecting the public health."

More information on lead poisoning prevention can be found at  
<http://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/phn/lead.html>