

# Lead screening in children

## Tip sheet



### Did you know?

California Health & Safety Code Sections 124125 to 124165 (<https://bit.ly/HSC-leadtest>) declared childhood lead exposure as the most significant childhood environmental health problem in the state, and established the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program to reduce the incidence of childhood lead exposure in California. Learn more about the issue:

<https://bit.ly/childhood-lead>

### Coding quick reference

CPT	Description
36416	Capillary collection
83655	Blood lead (venous) test*

\*If capillary or venous blood lead level is greater than or equal to 3.5 mcg/dL, all subsequent lead tests must be venous blood lead tests. Venous blood lead level retest until levels are under 3.5mcg/dL and stable.

### Why are lead screenings important?

Lead in blood has been shown to negatively affect IQ, ability to pay attention, and academic achievement. California regulations require a blood lead test at ages 12 months and 24 months (California Department of Public Health, 2018).

### Santa Clara Family Health Plan provider responsibilities:

<b>ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE</b>	<p>At each periodic assessment from 6 months to 6 years, <b>all</b> health care providers are <b>required</b><sup>1</sup> to inform parents and guardians about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The risks and effects of childhood lead exposure</li><li>• The requirement that children enrolled in Medi-Cal receive blood lead tests</li><li>• The requirement that children not enrolled in Medi-Cal who are at high risk of lead exposure receive blood lead tests</li></ul>
<b>BLOOD LEAD TEST</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For all children in publicly supported programs such as Medi-Cal, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and CHPD at both 12 months and 24 months of age<sup>1</sup>.</li><li>• Perform a “catch up” test for children ages 24 months to 6 years in a publicly supported program who were not tested at 12 and 24 months.</li></ul>
<b>ASSESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If child is not in a publicly supported program:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask: “Does your child live in, or spend a lot of time in, a place built before 1978 that has peeling or chipped paint or that has been recently remodeled?” <b>Require blood lead test if the answer to the question is “yes” or “don’t know.”</b></li></ul></li><li>• Require blood lead test if a change in circumstances has put child at risk of lead exposure.</li><li>• Consider a blood lead test if:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent or Guardian request one request</li><li>• Sibling, playmate, or other close contact has increased blood lead level</li><li>• Suspected lead exposure</li><li>• History of living in or visiting country with high levels of environmental lead</li></ul></li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Health and Safety Code, sections 105285-105286; California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Sections 37000 to 37100.  
Source: California Department of Public Health, 2018

### Resources

California’s Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program: <https://bit.ly/childhood-lead>  
DHCS’s blood lead test and anticipatory guidance: <https://bit.ly/DHCS-lead-guidance>

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