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Panhandle Health District

Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

Free Lead Level Screening

Panhandle Health District – August 04, 2022

Panhandle Health District (PHD) is offering free lead level screenings at the Shoshone Medical Center's Outreach building in Pinehurst, Idaho, August 8 – 13, for residents living within the Bunker Hill Superfund site. Lead testing is especially important for children, as children six years and younger are usually most susceptible to the negative effects of lead. PHD is encouraging families to bring their children in to be tested and learn more about what they can do to protect their family.

Not only do children ages 6 months to 6 years, living within the Bunker Hill Superfund boundary (see map), get tested for free, but each receives a \$50 incentive. Appointments typically take 15-20 minutes per person and results are available immediately. Should your child's test result indicate elevated lead levels, PHD will confirm the result with a blood draw and also offer a free home visit to identify any available lead source(s) and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate them.

Details are as follows:

Who: Residents within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site

When: 9:00am – 6:00pm, August 8-12

9:00am – 12:00pm, August 13

Where: Shoshone Medical Center Outreach Building: 11 Country Club Ln. Pinehurst, Idaho.

All children must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian. If you are unsure if you live within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site, see the map below or for more information, please call Panhandle Health District's Kellogg office at (208) 783-0707.

Blood-lead monitoring in the Silver Valley began in the early 1970s. At that time, 99% of the children tested had blood-lead levels over 40 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$), with a high of 164 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. Experts recommend that medical interventions are necessary when a child is found with a test result of greater than or equal to 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$. Today, PHD's efforts to identify

levels above 3.5 micrograms per deciliter will allow families, doctors, and communities to act earlier to reduce and eliminate further lead exposure.

“Families increase their risk of lead exposure when recreating along the shorelines of the South Fork, the chain lakes, the lower Coeur d’Alene River and around historic mine and mill sites,” explained Mary Rehnborg, PHD’s Institutional Controls Program Manager. “The removal of contaminated soil from over 8,000 properties within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site certainly helps, but there is still plenty of property that needs to be remediated and that is why the lead screenings are so important. Protecting our community from exposure to lead is our top priority.”

According to the CDC, there is no safe blood lead level for children. Here are 5 ways you can avoid lead exposure this summer:

1- Remove dirt from clothes, toys, pets, and equipment BEFORE leaving the area.

After spending time along the river, dust, shake or wash off what you can to minimize the dirt you bring home. Place wet and dirty clothes in a plastic bag so they can be washed at home.

2- When riding ATV’s, motorcycles, and bikes, wear protective gear.

A mask or bandana over your face can protect you from contaminated dust.

3- Play in grassy areas rather than dirt or mud.

Ingestion and inhalation are the most common routes of lead exposure – digging up and playing with contaminated soil can increase risk of lead exposure and absorption.

4- Wash hands correctly.

Keep hands clean, especially after playing outside and before eating. Use soap and warm water, but not creek or river water. Hand sanitizer removes germs but does not remove lead.

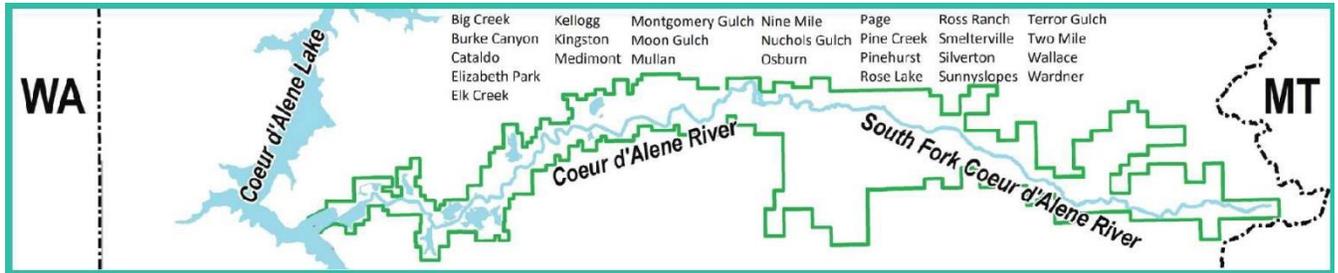
5- Get screened!

PHD’s Kellogg office offers free lead screening all year round. The lead screening event in August is the only time to receive the incentive funds.

In children, lead in the blood can cause behavior and learning problems, lower IQ levels, cause hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems and anemia, according to the EPA.

Lead interferes with a variety of body processes and is toxic to many organs and tissues including the heart and kidneys. In children, lead exposure affects neurological development, causing potentially permanent learning and behavior disorders.

Lead exposure often occurs with no obvious or immediate symptoms, so it frequently goes unrecognized. Even small amounts of lead exposure during summer recreation can have an effect, especially for young children. For more information about PHD’s Lead Health Intervention Program, visit: www.panhandlehealthdistrict.org/institutional-controls-program/.



Map of Bunker Hill Superfund Site

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Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.