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Together, We Can Prevent Childhood Lead Exposure National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, October 22-28

OSHKOSH, Wis. (October 23, 2023) – Each year, National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is a call to bring together individuals, organizations, and state and local governments to reduce childhood exposure to lead. Lead is toxic, especially in young children. Even low levels of lead in a child's blood can result in damage to the brain and nervous system, learning and behavior problems, slow growth and development, and hearing and speech problems.

Winnebago County Public Health works to eliminate lead hazards with its [Lead-Safe Homes Program](#). This program helps pay for the safe removal of lead from rental and owner-occupied homes. The public health department works directly with homeowners and contractors to coordinate a risk assessment and remove lead hazards. If a home qualifies for the program, up to 100 percent of the lead abatement costs could be covered. Lead-safe repairs may include new windows, siding, doors, painting, gutters or other lead hazard repairs.

"We have many older homes in Winnebago County, and the fact is that about half of the homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint," said Scott Fischer, Lead Abatement Project Coordinator for Winnebago County Public Health. "With the launch of our Lead-Safe Homes Program about a year ago, we have been able to remove dangerous lead from many homes in our community, making them safer for children and people who are pregnant."

In general, the older the home or building, the more likely it is to have lead-based paint. In 1978, the federal government banned consumer use of lead-containing paint, which is why the Lead-Safe Homes Program focuses on homes built before 1978. When lead-based paint gets old, it can start to chip, crack or chalk and become a serious health hazard, especially for young children and pregnant people. The lead paint may not be easy to see; it is commonly found in household dust, window wells and soil. Homeowners and landlords of properties built before 1978 are encouraged to apply for the Lead-Safe Homes Program. If you are a renter, talk with your landlord and encourage them to apply. Properties that meet the following criteria may be eligible:

- Children or pregnant women live in or regularly visit the home and are on Medicaid or BadgerCare Plus.
- The home or rental property was built before 1978.
- The property is insured and taxes are up to date.

Children who are lead-poisoned typically do not look or act sick. A blood test is the best way to find out if a child has lead poisoning. A test result of 3.5 micrograms per deciliter of lead in blood or higher is

reported to Winnebago County Public Health, and staff works with the family to help eliminate lead exposure. Parents and caregivers can talk with a healthcare provider about the risk of lead exposure and ask for a blood lead test if children are under the age of six. If you do not have insurance or need help getting a lead test for your child, contact Winnebago County Public Health to schedule a lead screening.

If you do not qualify for the Lead-Safe Homes Program but would like a lead hazard risk assessment, you can find a certified inspector or risk assessor by visiting the [United States Environmental Protection Agency's website](#) or calling the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask your landlord to have your home or apartment tested if you rent. To find out if you have lead in your drinking water, contact your water company and ask about testing.

For more information about lead poisoning or the [Lead-Safe Homes Program](#), contact the Winnebago County Health Department at 920-232-3000 or visit www.winnebagopublichealth.org.

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