

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Making Lead Poisoning History

Worcester County Health Department is promoting Lead Prevention Awareness Week, October 23 – 28, 2006. This year's theme is "Making Lead Poisoning History." A key in prevention is educating rental property owners about the law on registration of rental properties and promoting special grant and loan programs that are available for making their properties lead safe. A free presentation, for rental property owners, will be held at Wor-Wic Community College on October 25th from 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Call Suzanne Carley at 410-820-9105 to register.

Symptoms of lead poisoning are not always obvious, it is usually a silent disease and can affect the brain, blood, kidneys, as well as other parts of the body. Effects can range from appetite changes, a lower I.Q., and behavior problems to seizures, coma, and death. Children six months to six years are the main victims of lead poisoning. Based on the risk of exposure in Worcester County, lead testing is recommended for all

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children 12 and 24 months of age. Many parents are not aware that children entering pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade in the Worcester County public school system are now required to provide the school with documentation that the child has been tested for lead.

Be lead smart! Teach children to wash their hands often, take shoes off before coming in the house, check craft/hobby item labels to make sure they do not contain lead, and check your home (inside and outside) for hazards. If you rent, you should have received a copy of tenant rights and a copy of the current lead inspection certificate when you signed your contract. If you did not, ask your landlord. If you are interested in having your child tested, contact your doctor. If your child does not have a doctor or health insurance, call Jimmy Banks at 410-629-0164. If you have questions or would like more information about lead, call Debbie Farlow at 410-629-0164, or log onto www.mde.state.md.us, and select "lead".