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**Clinton County Health Department
Press Release
“Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week”
October 21-27, 2007**

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week will be observed from October 21 to 27, when the Clinton County Health Department is reminding parents that most children with lead poisoning do not look or feel sick. The only sure way to know if a child has lead poisoning is to get a blood lead test.

If you have children, you should know that lead poisoning is the number one preventable environmental health threat in the United States. Although it is true that children living in older homes are at greatest risk, lead poisoning is a danger to every family, regardless of where they live or their economic background.

The most common source of lead poisoning is from paint made before 1978 and the dust it turns into. According to Darwyna Facticeau, Supervising Public Health Nurse of the Clinton County Health Department, “lead is especially dangerous for young children since they spend a lot of time on the floor, and they put hands, toys and other things in their mouth. This is why all children should be tested for lead exposure”. In New York State, all children must be offered testing around age one year and again at or around age two years. Pregnant women who have any lead in their bodies can also pass the lead to their unborn babies. Facticeau states “even a small amount of lead can cause learning and behavioral problems later in life”. Other complications due to high lead levels are anemia, growth problems, a lower IQ, and hearing loss.

Keeping your home in good repair is the first step in preventing lead poisoning. If you live in a house or apartment built before 1978, it’s important to repair any peeling paint properly. When paint flakes are disturbed, the home can become filled with lead-containing dust. Call a local health department before you do any repair work to find out how to paint and repair safely.

Frequent washing is an effective way to keep lead from accumulating. Facticeau recommends the following:

- Wash children’s hands often, especially before eating and before bed time.
- Wash toys, pacifiers and bottles often, even if they don’t look dirty.
- Mop floors often with a damp mop, and use damp cloths to clean windowsills.

“Whatever the age of your house or apartment, children can be exposed to lead if you let it get into your food or bring it into your home,” Facticeau said. You can also help protect your children from lead by serving foods rich in calcium, iron, and vitamin C.

For more information on how to protect children from exposure to lead, call the Clinton County Health Department at 565-4848 or check the Clinton County Health Department's web site at www.clintonhealth.org.

Endorsed by: _____
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