

Lead Testing

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Blood lead level (BLL) testing is required at the 12- and 24-month C&TC visits and for children up to 6 years of age who did not have a BLL screen performed at 24 months. There is no safe BLL for children.

C&TC standards

General

BLL tests are required at ages 12- and 24-months during C&TC visits and for children up to 6 years of age who did not have a BLL test at the 24-month visit.

In addition, test children aged 0-17 years if their history indicates concern for lead poisoning or if their risk factors change. Refer to the [Blood Lead Level Guidelines](#).

Personnel

Medical assistants or lab technicians may complete the testing. A licensed health care provider must interpret the results and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Documentation

Document a complete record of lab test results in the patient’s record.

Refer to the documentation forms on the [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources](#)

webpage for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

BLL testing is a program requirement for children enrolled in Head Start; include results in Head Start documentation.

Procedure

Completion of a risk questionnaire alone does not meet C&TC requirements. A blood lead test is the only way to tell if a child was exposed to lead.

Perform a blood lead test on either capillary or venous blood samples. Wash the child’s hands before performing capillary BLL tests.

- [Steps for Collecting Fingertick Blood Samples in Micro-Vials for Lead Testing](#)

A venous blood lead test is required to confirm capillary BLL results greater than or equal to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL).

Confirmatory testing timeline for elevated capillary BLL samples

If the result of capillary screening test is:	Confirm with a venous draw no later than:
3.5 – 9.9 mcg/dL	1 month
10 – 44.9 mcg/dL	1 week
45 – 59.9 mcg/dL	48 hours
≥ 60 mcg/dL	Immediately

Source: Childhood Lead Treatment Guidelines for Minnesota (MDH, 2025a).

Referral and follow-up

Primary care providers must provide appropriate follow-up for children who have a BLL greater than or equal to 3.5 mcg/dL. Refer to [Childhood Blood Lead Treatment Guidelines](#) for protocols.

Labs or clinics analyzing lead tests must report all blood lead tests to MDH. Health care providers do not need to report results to MDH unless they suspect improper reporting. If a test result is ≥ 3.5 mcg/dL, MDH automatically shares it with Local Public Health for case management and health education. If the result is ≥ 5 mcg/dL on a venous sample, it is also shared with risk assessors who complete an environmental risk assessment to test for sources of lead exposure.

Importance of lead testing

There is no safe BLL for children. Many individuals with elevated BLLs have no apparent signs or symptoms. Lead toxicity can affect every organ system, and even low levels of exposure may produce harmful health and learning effects (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024).

Additional MDH recommendations

The [Childhood Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Minnesota](#) recommend BLL testing of *all* children in MN at 12 *and* 24 months of age, and targeted BLL testing for children ages 25 months through 17 years.

For newly arrived refugees 6 years of age and under, retest BLL three to six months after placement in a permanent residence (MDH, 2025b).

MDH recommends blood lead screening for pregnant women at risk of elevated BLL. Infants of mothers with an elevated BLL may need specific follow-up. Refer to [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women in Minnesota](#).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Lead](#)

Other resources

- [About the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#)
- [Lead Exposure](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

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Resource links

- [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening)
- [C&TC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment resources \(https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources\)](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources)
- [Steps for Collecting Fingerstick Blood Samples in Micro-Vials for Lead Testing \(https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/pdf/lead-fingerstick-poster-508.pdf\)](https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/pdf/lead-fingerstick-poster-508.pdf)
- [Childhood Blood Lead Treatment Guidelines \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf)
- [Childhood Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Minnesota \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening)
- [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women in Minnesota \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#pregnant\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#pregnant)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards \(https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG\)](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section \(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092\)](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/index.html)

- [Lead \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead)
- [About the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program \(https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/about-clppp/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/about-clppp/)
- [Lead Exposure \(https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/lead-exposure/\)](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/lead-exposure/)

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2024, April). *Lead exposure symptoms and complications*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/symptoms-complications/>
- Minnesota Department of Health (2025a, January). *Minnesota childhood blood lead treatment guidelines*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf>
- Minnesota Department of Health (2025b, June). *Domestic refugee health screening guidance: Blood lead screening*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/rih/guide/9lead.html>