

CDC's Response to Federal Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

In January 2012, the Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (ACCLPP)* recommended that CDC change its "blood lead level of concern," which has been 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter. The recommendation was based on a growing number of scientific studies showing that even low blood lead levels can cause lifelong health effects. Today, CDC is officially announcing our agreement with that recommendation and the change in CDC policy.

ACCLPP recommends that CDC eliminate the term "level of concern" and lower the blood lead level for remedial action. Instead, the committee recommends linking elevated blood lead levels to data from the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey (NHANES) to identify children living or staying for long periods in environments that expose them to lead hazards. This new level, called a "reference value," is based on the population of children aged 1-5 years in the U.S. whose blood lead levels are in the highest 2.5% of children tested. Today, that level is 5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) of lead in blood.

In future publications, "level of concern" will be replaced with the reference value and the date of the NHANES that was used to calculate it. The new value means that more children likely will be identified as having lead exposure and that parents, doctors, public health officials, and communities can take action earlier to prevent health effects.

For more than 20 years, NCEH's work to eliminate lead poisoning in children has been one of CDC's most visibly successful initiatives. It has contributed to lowering significantly the number of U.S. children ages 1-5 years old with elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs), to increasing the number of children tested for EBLLs, and to promoting state and local lead screening plans and abatement laws.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/ACCLPP/activities.htm>.

* The Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (ACCLPP) advises and guides the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding new scientific knowledge and technical developments and their practical implications for childhood lead poisoning prevention efforts.