

Blood Lead and Turf Field Q and A
New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
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Q: How are children and adults exposed to lead from artificial turf fields?

A: Lead gets into a person's body when they swallow or inhale dust, soil, paint, or other material, including artificial turf, that contains lead. When we swallow something that contains lead, some of the lead will cross from our digestive system and into our blood. Lead that does not get into our blood passes out of our bodies. The amount that we absorb depends on our age (infants and very young children absorb more lead than older children and adults). We know that lead from paint, soil, water, food and other products does get into a person's blood; we are not certain how easily this occurs with artificial turf. The DHSS is conducting specialized testing that mimics the human digestive system to see if lead leaches out of artificial turf in the same way that it leaches out of paint and other products.

Q: Should children who used any of the fields that have high lead levels get blood lead tests?

A: The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services does not suggest that all people who played at the fields with high lead levels should have a blood lead test. However, if children who are 6 years of age or younger have used one of the fields and have not been recently tested for lead, their parents or caregivers should request that their health care provider do blood lead testing.

Q: If my child's blood lead level comes back high, does this mean they had exposures from the turf?

A: Not necessarily. A blood lead level tells us that a child has a current or recent exposure to lead, but does not identify the source of the lead. Depending on your child's blood lead level, your local health department may investigate your child's home and environment for lead sources and recommend that others in the household be tested for lead. Your local health department may also provide parents and caregivers with information about reducing exposures to lead or reducing the health risks from exposures. Very high blood lead levels may require medical treatment.

Q: Should adults have blood lead tests if they used the fields?

A: Adults aren't likely to have the same levels of exposures as children to any source of lead, not just the fields. Adults are less likely to swallow non-food items (such as lead contaminated dirt). Although anyone who swallows or inhales lead will absorb some of the lead into their blood, adults will absorb much less lead than children.

Q: What are the State's requirements for blood lead testing of children?

A: All children in New Jersey are at risk of lead poisoning; therefore, New Jersey State law (Public Law 1995, chapter 328) requires every physician, professional registered nurse, and health care facility to screen all children under six years of age who come to them for care.

Specifically, all children should be screened for lead poisoning at 12 and 24 months of age. Any child between three and six years of age who has never previously been screened should also be screened.

Children as young as six months of age who are exposed to a known or suspected lead hazard should also be screened. Parents have the right to refuse to have the test done for any reason.

Q: Where can I get more information about childhood blood lead testing?

A: You can speak with your child's health care provider, or visit the DHSS Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention website, <http://nj.gov/health/fhs/newborn/lead.shtml> .