



Family Health Fact Sheet

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What does the Family Health program do?

The Family Health Program works with families in the Trail area to prevent children's exposure to lead and promote children's healthy development. The program offers information and education for parents on how to prevent lead exposure, in-home visits for families with children under 12 months, children's blood lead testing for children 6-36 months, support for families where children have blood lead levels above the typical range, and referrals to the Home & Garden Program. We also provide information on early learning programs and other local resources for families. All of our programs are free and voluntary.

Reaching All Families

We make an effort to reach all new families and pregnant women. We promote our programs in the community and offer education sessions to pregnancy outreach programs, pre-natal groups, early learning programs and community events for families with young children.

- Please contact us if you live in Trail or Rivervale and you're expecting or just had a baby.
- Please contact us if you're new to the community and have young children or are expecting.
- Please tell your neighbour, friend, daughter, nephew, etc. about how to reach us if they have young children, or if they have questions.
- If you're doing home renovations, please contact our Lead Safe Renovation Program at (250) 368-3256, by e-mail at programs@thep.ca, or drop by our Community Program Office at 1319 Bay Avenue. This is part of our Home & Garden Program.

Why is the focus on young children?

- young children absorb lead up to 5 times more easily than older children or adults
- small children are most likely to put dirty hands, food, and toys in their mouths and most lead gets into the body through the mouth

- the early years of life are crucial for brain development, the years when children are also most at risk from the effects of lead exposure

What does this program offer to families?

Information on how to reduce children's lead exposure:

The Interior Health Public Health RN offers education and information for parents, caregivers and expectant families on how to reduce lead exposure. This includes how to keep the home and yard environment dust free and what's best for children's nutrition. Brochures and health tips are available on this website. For more detailed information, please contact Jeannine Stefani, Interior Health Public Health RN at (250) 364-6223, jeannine.stefani@interiorhealth.ca, or drop by the Kiro Wellness Centre, Suite 2 – 1500 Columbia Avenue in Trail.

Healthy Families in-home visit to help prevent lead exposure

Families living in Trail or Rivervale with children under 12 months of age are offered a Healthy Family visit from Interior Health Public Health Registered Nurse (RN), Jeannine Stefani. Visits include education, advice, support and answers to your questions about your children's healthy development and how to prevent their exposure to lead.

Blood lead testing and follow-up support to keep blood lead levels down

The program tests the blood lead levels in children aged 6-36 months living in Trail and Rivervale. Testing is available at parents' request for children under 5 years anywhere in the Lower Columbia. Families new to the area or completing recent home renovations are encouraged to participate.

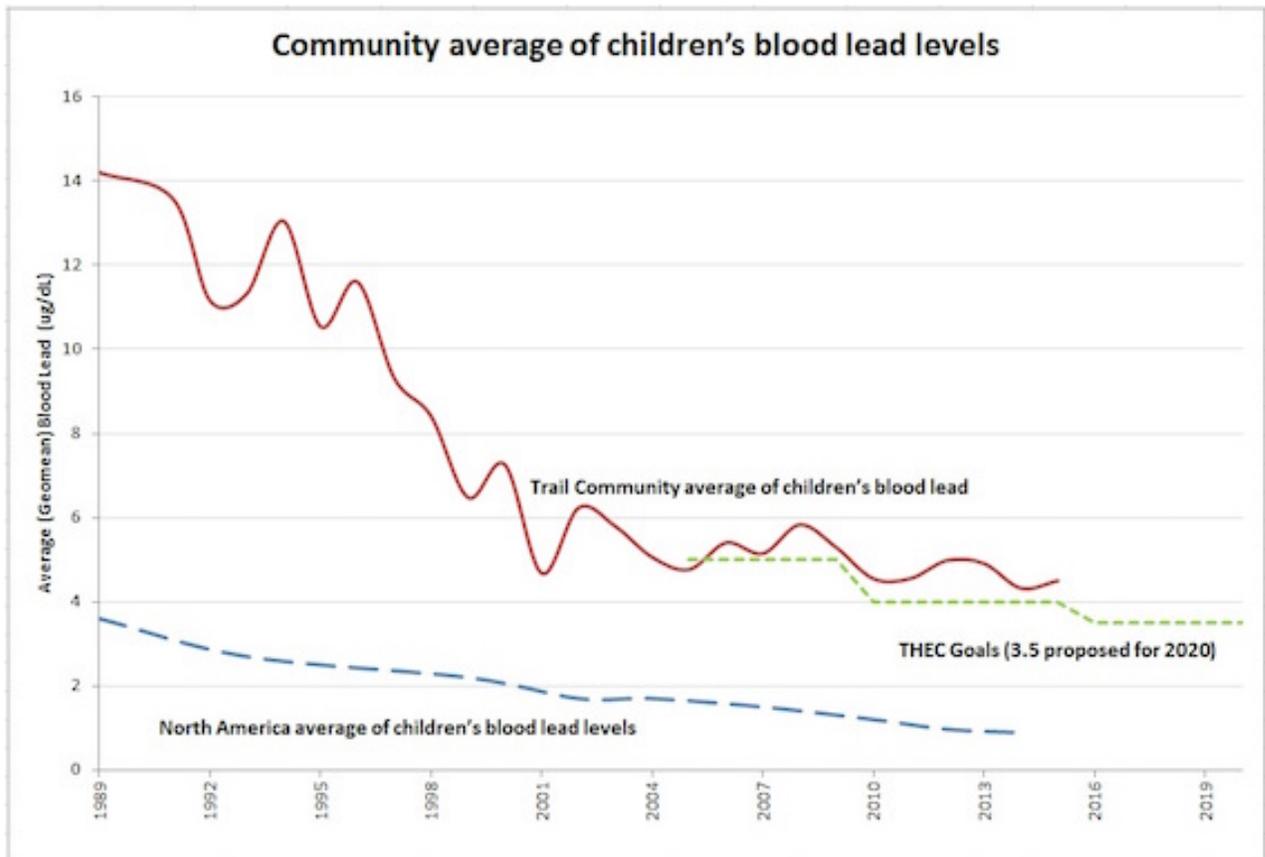
It is important to find out early if your child's blood lead level is rising or is higher than most children's in the area. If it is, an Interior Health Public Health RN follows up with an in-home visit to help identify possible sources of lead exposure and make a plan with parents to reduce or eliminate exposure. This includes advice and information on nutrition, hand washing, damp mopping, vacuuming and damp dusting, ways to keep dirt from being tracked in the house, and checking for lead-based paint. Support may include referral to the Home & Garden program for free soil testing and replacement (if needed), and advice about covering areas of bare soil in the yard. The nurse assists parents until the child's blood lead level has been reduced successfully.

Collaborating with other groups that support young families

We are dedicated to supporting children's health and development. Reducing lead exposure is our main focus but we know there are many factors that influence children's well-being. We are a founding member of the Family Action Network, collaborating with other groups in the Lower Columbia region to make this the best place to raise a family. This includes developmental screening for children 6 and under at one of the semi-annual Ages and Stages Days. For more information on the Family Action Network or other supports for children and families, please contact Christy Anderson, Executive Director at coordinator@familyactionnetwork.ca or call (toll free) 1-855-368-3707.

What have we achieved for children's health?

Our program has been working with Trail area families since 1989. Blood lead levels in Trail pre-school children have dropped significantly, from an average of 13.5 to around 4.5 micrograms per decilitre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) since annual blood lead testing started in 1989. The percentage of children with blood lead levels below 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ has gone from less than 20% in 1989 to about 90% today. This has held fairly steady for the past several years.



How do we set goals for children's health?

The Trail Area Health & Environment Committee (THEC) stays abreast of government guidelines for children's blood lead levels. The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) uses a "reference value" to identify blood leads above a typical range and situations where a lead exposure prevention and reduction program should be in place. We have provided a comprehensive lead exposure prevention and reduction program in the Trail area for over 25 years. During that time, the North American "background" average blood lead for pre-school children has declined from 4 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ to 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ so the "typical range" is getting lower and lower.

Our goal is to reduce exposure to lead and other smelter metals in the community on a continual improvement basis. Scientific studies of "populations" of children show that health, learning and behavioural effects of lead exposure can occur even at low levels. These health effects occur on a continuum with less exposure meaning lower health risks. At the blood lead levels we currently see in Trail, these effects would be subtle and likely not be noticeable or measurable in individual children. But we know there's more that can be done to make the Trail area the best possible environment for young families.

The THEC sets bold realistic goals that are acceptable to the community and government. The proposed 2020 children's blood lead goal of 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ is based on our [Air Quality Program](#) achieving its projected results for emissions reduction. This proposed goal is being reviewed by the public through a broad community consultation in Fall, 2016.

Children's blood lead goal:

• to have an average blood lead level of 3.5 µg/dL or lower for children aged 6 to 36 months in Trail and Rivervale by 2020

Family health is a community effort

Interior Health provides education, testing and support to families. Teck and the City of Trail work to improve air quality. The Community Program Office offers home renovation support and soil testing and remediation. Parents can help by getting their children tested, making needed changes to their home and garden environments, and optimizing children's nutrition to reduce lead exposure and absorption.

Please know that you, and others like you, help make this program a success!

Goal for participation in blood lead testing:

• A minimum of 75% of children aged 6 to 36 months in Trail & Rivervale will participate in voluntary blood lead testing clinics each year.

In the past few years, the participation rate has been about 72%- 74%. We'd like to see this increase to at least 75% and we're very close! We need to keep testing as many children aged 6 to 36 months as possible. We want to make sure that our exposure prevention efforts are working, and the proof is in the testing. Also, we need to have a high participation rate to reach our blood lead level goal of 3.5 µg/dL. Let's keep reducing lead exposure for all Trail area children.

What are 10 Top Tips for Family Health?

Most Trail area families know what they need to do to keep their children safe from lead exposure. Are all of these on your list?

1. Make sure your children wash their hands and wash your hands often: always wash hands before eating or touching food (even if you've only been indoors) and when coming in from outside.
2. Keep your home clean with frequent vacuuming, wet-mopping and damp-dusting. Avoid sweeping.
3. Keep floors super clean if you have a baby crawling. For a younger baby, put a blanket on the floor. Wash toys, soothers, and bottle nipples often, especially when children are teething.
4. Keep children and pregnant women away from home renovations. Contact the Lead Safe Renovation Program. Clean up well when renovations are finished.
5. Leave outside shoes at the door. Place a dust mat at your door.
6. Eat regular healthy, balanced meals with lots of calcium, iron and vitamin C. Avoid unhealthy high fat foods or having an empty stomach, as lead is absorbed more easily.
7. Wash garden veggies and fruit before eating them. Peel root veggies and wash leafy greens really well.
8. Keep outdoor play areas clean. Sandboxes need clean sand and should be covered when not in use. Regularly hose driveways, childrens toys, play equipment, decks and paved areas. Healthy grass is a great play area.
9. Brush and wash pets often and always outdoors. Keep them off children's beds.
10. Cover up areas of bare soil in your yard, and keep grass healthy. Contact the [Home & Garden Program](#).

How can I get more information?

For information on the Family Health Program, contact Jeannine Stefani, Interior Health, at (250) 364-6223.

To see where the Family Health Program is offered, please see the Family Health Program map on our maps page.