



COUNTY OF POLK
Health Department

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Polk County Health Department News Release

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Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

During Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 23-29, 2011) Polk County Health Department Officials warn community residents how to reduce the risk their child might become lead poisoned.

“If your home was built before 1978 assume the paint is lead based. If you hire a contractor to work on your house, make sure they are certified by the Iowa Department of Public Health as a lead-safe renovator. If you do repair work yourself, make sure to follow lead safe work practices”, said Terri Henkels, Polk County Health Department Director.

Lead paint, which was banned from residential use in 1978, is the primary source of lead poisoning in Iowa. Disturbing lead paint creates hazardous lead dust. Lead is a neurotoxin and especially toxic for young children.

“Because not all contractors have the skills to keep the members of your household safe the law requires contractors working with lead to receive special training and become certified,” said Ms. Henkels.

According to Iowa law, contractors who disturb a total of one square foot or more of interior or exterior painted surface on projects in housing, child care facilities, or schools built before 1978 are required to receive special training and be certified as a lead-safe renovator.

“The keys to lead safe work practices are three-fold. Work Smart, Work Wet and Work Clean. Follow these guidelines and you will protect your child from any unnecessary risks from home repair work,” said Ms. Henkels.

Work Smart includes wearing proper personal protective clothing; shutting down the HVAC system and installing heavy duty plastic firmly and securely. Working Wet means mist the work area with water; wet scrape, sand, pry, saw, plane, drill and remove painted materials and using shaving cream to control dust when drilling. Working Clean includes using a tack cloth to wipe dust, installing catch bags under work and controlling the dust.

(MORE)

A short video about lead safe work practices can be viewed on the Polk County Health Department web page <http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/Health/Pages/leadPoisoning.aspx>