



## **MONMOUTH COUNTY REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION NO. 1**

1540 WEST PARK AVE., TINTON FALLS, NJ 07724

[www.mcrhc.org](http://www.mcrhc.org)

### **Press Release**

Contact: David Henry

Phone: 732-493-9520

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### **Free Childhood Lead Screenings Available in Monmouth County**

The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission No. 1 (MCRHC) is offering free childhood lead screenings once a month. The program started on Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup>. The public is welcome to walk in or make an appointment by calling 732-493-9520. The screening is open to children ages 12 months to 6 years of age.

Nearly half a million children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels that could cause significant damage to their health, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To help address this and the increased knowledge of lead poisoning occurrences, the Monmouth County Regional Health Commission is offering the program free of cost to Monmouth County residents.

Elevated blood lead levels in children are based on a test result of 5 micrograms per deciliter or higher. In New Jersey, more than 3,500 children tested positive for lead poisoning in 2018. Exposures to lead can interfere with normal brain development in young children, causing irreversible injury.

According to Health Officer David Henry, all children are at risk for lead poisoning, particularly those living in homes built before 1978. Henry says, "Some of NJ communities have very high rates of very old housing and many of these homes contain lead-based paint. As the condition of the housing deteriorates or renovations are done, young children may be exposed to dust or paint chips containing lead." Children can also be exposed to lead from additional sources including contaminated drinking water, take-home exposures from a workplace, and lead in soil.

Community members are learning how to prevent lead poisoning's serious health effects. Parents can reduce a child's exposure to lead in many ways. Here are some simple things you can do to help protect your family:

1. Get your Home Tested. If you live in a home built before 1978, you may want to consider getting a lead inspection. Hire certified lead professionals and contractors.
2. Get your Child Tested. Children should be screened for lead exposure at 12 months and 24 months of age or once between 3 and 6 years of age, if not previously screened. If you suspect your child may have been exposed to lead, talk to your doctor or local health department about lead testing. The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission offers lead testing for free for children.
3. Get Help: If your child is tested and has an elevated blood lead level, please contact your local health department. A public health nurse can visit your home to provide education and important information about possible sources of lead and can help you access any needed services.
4. Get the Facts. For more information, visit [www.mcrhc.org](http://www.mcrhc.org).

To make an appointment for a screening call the Monmouth County Regional Health Commission at 732-493-9520. Screenings are located at 1540 West Park Ave, Ocean Township, NJ 07712 (look for the MCRHC awning in the Red Cross building).

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The Monmouth County Regional Health Commission provides shared public health services to nineteen (19) towns: Allenhurst, Brielle, Deal, Fair Haven, Interlaken, Little Silver, Loch Arbour, Middletown, Monmouth Beach, Ocean Township, Red Bank, Rumson, Sea Bright, Sea Girt, Shrewsbury, Spring Lake, Spring Lake Heights, Tinton Falls, and West Long Branch.