

Lead Testing

CHILD AND TEEN CHECKUPS (C&TC) FACT SHEET FOR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS

Blood lead level (BLL) testing is required at the 12- and 24-month C&TC visits and for children up to 6 years of age who did not have a BLL screen performed at 24 months. There is no safe BLL for children.

C&TC standards

General

BLL tests are required at ages 12- and 24-months during C&TC visits and for children up to 6 years of age who did not have a BLL test at the 24-month visit. Test children if their history indicates concern for lead poisoning or if their risk factors change; the testing is covered as part of the C&TC visit.

Refer to the [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Minnesota](#).

For newly arrived refugees less than 72 months of age, retest BLL three to six months after placement in a permanent residence (Minnesota Department of Health, 2024).

Personnel

Medical assistants or lab technicians may complete the testing. A licensed health care provider must interpret the results and ensure appropriate follow-up: physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or registered or public health nurse (RN, PHN) who has completed the C&TC Comprehensive Screening training through the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Documentation

Document a complete record of lab test results in the patient's record.

Refer to the [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](#) for documentation examples or to use as a template with your electronic medical record.

BLL is a program requirement for children enrolled in Head Start; include results in Head Start documentation.

Procedure

Completion of a risk questionnaire alone does not meet C&TC requirements. A blood lead test is the only way to tell if a child was exposed to lead.

Perform a blood lead test on either capillary or venous blood samples. Wash the child's hands before performing capillary BLL tests.

- [Steps for Collecting Fingerstick Blood Samples in Micro-Vials for Lead Testing](#)

A venous blood lead test is required to confirm capillary BLL results greater than or equal to 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL).

Confirmatory testing timeline for elevated capillary BLL samples

If the result of capillary screening test is:	Confirm with a venous draw no later than:
3.5 – 9.9 mcg/dL	1 month
10 – 44.9 mcg/dL	1 week
45 – 59.9 mcg/dL	48 hours
≥ 60 mcg/dL	Immediately

Source: Childhood Lead Treatment Guidelines for Minnesota (Minnesota Department of Health, 2025).

Referral and follow-up

Primary care providers must provide appropriate follow-up for children who have a BLL greater than or equal to 3.5 mcg/dL. Refer to [Childhood Blood Lead Treatment Guidelines](#) for protocols.

Labs or clinics analyzing lead tests must report all blood lead tests to MDH. Health care providers do not need to report results to MDH unless they suspect improper reporting. If a test result is ≥ 3.5 mcg/dL, MDH shares it with Local Public Health for case management and health education. If the result is ≥ 5 mcg/dL on a venous sample, it is also shared with risk assessors who complete an environmental risk assessment to test for sources of lead exposure.

Indicate a referral with the appropriate HIPAA-compliant referral code on the claim.

Guidelines for women during pregnancy and lactation

MDH recommends blood lead screening for pregnant women at risk of elevated BLL. Infants of mothers with an elevated BLL may need specific follow-up. Refer to [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women in Minnesota](#).

Importance of lead testing

There is no safe blood lead level for children. Many individuals with elevated blood lead levels have no apparent signs or symptoms. Lead toxicity can affect every organ system, and even low levels of exposure may produce harmful health and learning effects (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024).

Resources

Minnesota Department of Human Services

- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](#)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](#)

Minnesota Department of Health

- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](#)
- [Lead](#)

Other resources

- [About the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#)
- [Lead Exposure](#)

For more information

The Child and Teen Checkups (C&TC) program is administered through a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Minnesota Department of Health.

For questions about this fact sheet or to obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-3650 or email health.childteencheckups@state.mn.us.

Revised 04/2025

Resource links

- [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Minnesota](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#screening>)
- [C&TC Provider Documentation Forms](https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/)
(<https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/minnesota-health-care-programs/provider/types/ctc-resources/>)
- [Steps for Collecting Fingerstick Blood Samples in Micro-Vials for Lead Testing](https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/pdf/lead-fingerstick-poster-508.pdf)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/pdf/lead-fingerstick-poster-508.pdf>)
- [Childhood Blood Lead Treatment Guidelines](http://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf)
(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf)
- [Blood Lead Screening Guidelines for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women in Minnesota](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#pregnant)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/prof/guidelines.html#pregnant>)
- [Childhood Blood Lead Clinical Treatment Guidelines for Minnesota](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatatmanual.pdf)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatatmanual.pdf>)
- [C&TC Schedule of Age-Related Screening Standards](https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG)
(<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3379-ENG>)
- [Minnesota Health Care Programs \(MHCP\) Provider Manual - C&TC Section](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
(www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=dhs16_150092)
- [Child and Teen Checkups \(C&TC\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/index.html)
(www.health.state.mn.us/people/childreynouth/ctc/index.html)

- [Lead](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/)
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/>)
- [About the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/about-clppp/)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/php/about-clppp/>)
- [Lead Exposure](https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/lead-exposure/)
(<https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/lead-exposure/>)

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *Lead Exposure Symptoms and Complications*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/symptoms-complications/>
- Minnesota Department of Health. (2024). *Minnesota Domestic Refugee Health Screening Guidance*. Retrieved from www.health.state.mn.us/communities/rih/guide/index.html
- Minnesota Department of Health. (2025). *Childhood Blood Lead Treatment Guidelines for Minnesota*. Retrieved from www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/lead/docs/reports/cbltreatsummary.pdf