



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

December 15, 2023

Dear Provider:

This letter contains important information for you and your patients related to childhood lead exposure. The Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Department of the Environment want you to be aware of several recent issues in the news so that you can more effectively answer questions from your patients.

- **Lead contamination of WanaBana apple sauce:** On October 31, 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced a [voluntary recall of WanaBana Apple Cinnamon Fruit Purée pouches](#) due to elevated levels of lead found in certain units of the product. This product has been sold in Maryland, and consumers who have the product should throw it out. More information is available on the [FDA website](#). If your patient has consumed this product, it is appropriate to consider a lead test. **Providers should continue to test all children at ages 12 and 24 months, as required in Code of Maryland Regulations 10.11.04. It is also important that children with an elevated blood lead value be thoroughly assessed for other potential sources of lead exposure, even if they have consumed a WanaBana product. Lead is still widely distributed in the environment, and providers should work with the family to ensure there is a thorough evaluation of all potential sources of lead.**
- Maryland Department of Health and Maryland Department of the Environment remind providers that race, ethnicity, parent/guardian contact information (name, address, phone number) and specimen sample type and date of collection are required for the [laboratory specimen requisition](#). This information helps the Maryland Childhood Lead Registry more effectively identify groups at risk who are not being tested.
- Starting January 1, 2024, the Maryland Department of the Environment has legal authority to perform environmental investigations for properties in which a child under 72 months has a blood lead level ≥ 3.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ (the current Blood Lead Reference Value). The Department will continue to prioritize investigations based on the child's lead level and other risk factors (siblings, pregnancy).
- Providers are also reminded that children whose families have emigrated may be at risk of historically acquired lead exposures, but should be asked about other potential sources, including spices, foods, cooking vessels, cosmetics, and home remedies. Newly arrived families may not understand elevated lead-related risks. **There are new resources available from the State that have been translated to Spanish, Pashto, French and Dari available on the Department of Health website.**

- There have been several cases in Maryland recently involving children with high lead levels that have required chelation therapy. **Providers are reminded that children with hand-to-mouth activity or pica are at increased risk of lead poisoning.**

If you have questions regarding lead poisoning prevention or childhood lead testing, please see our Resources page at: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEhfp/eh/Pages/Lead.aspx>, or the Maryland Department of the Environment's page for health care providers at: <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/land/LeadPoisoningPrevention/Pages/healthcare.aspx>. You can also contact the Environmental Health Help Line at 1-866-703-3266.

Sincerely,



Clifford S. Mitchell, MS, MD, MPH
Director, Environmental Health Bureau

cc: Maryland Department of the Environment
Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program