

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services; I am Mary Tedesco-Schneck and I am a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and an Assistant Professor at the University of Maine in the School of Nursing. I also serve as a member of the board for the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Today I am speaking on behalf of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Written testimony has been submitted by myself and my colleague Dr. Sid Sewall for your review. Right now, I would like to take a few minutes to add to the submitted written testimony and highlight some important evidence regarding the effects of lead on children and communities.

1. There is no safe lead level.
2. Lead is absorbed via inhalation of lead-containing dust and ingestion of lead from surfaces (e.g., paint chips, imported toys) and contaminated food or water. Gastrointestinal absorption is higher in children.
3. Once lead enters the body either by inhalation or ingestion it binds to RBCs and then is distributed to soft tissue and eventually bone where it can persist for decades.
4. Binding to the RBC can cause anemia.
5. When lead is in the bone, it can be released back into the bloodstream during pregnancy and lactation. In pregnancy, this can affect fetal growth.
6. Lead exposure can affect children's learning, attention span, and visual and verbal memory.
7. Lead exposure does not just affect children. Reduced gray matter volume in the adult brain has been associated with childhood lead exposure neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's Disease and disorders such as anxiety and depression.

Although there is a cost associated with remediation, action supports the long-term health care savings and reduction of human suffering.

Mary Tedesco-Schneck PhD, RN, CPNP

Reference

Naranjo, V.I., Hendricks, M., & Jones, K.S. (2020). Lead toxicity in children: An unremitting public health problem. *Pediatric Neurology, 113*, 51-55.

Mary Tedesco-Schneck
Bangor

This is the additional testimony that I provided today. Thank you for your time.