For Your Doctor

If you don't have health insurance, call 211.



Your patient lives near the Exide former battery recycling plant in Vernon that released harmful chemicals such as lead and arsenic into surrounding communities. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is cleaning affected areas. Los Angeles County is providing information, blood lead testing, and other resources to community members. We encourage you to properly assess any of your patients that may be affected by the Exide plant and provide all medically necessary resources to properly evaluate and treat them.

Key Pollutants and Health Risks

Key pollutants that were released during the operations of the Exide plant included lead, arsenic, benzene, and 1,3-butadiene. Arsenic, benzene, and 1,3-butadiene are no longer in the environment, but people who were exposed to them in the past could still face long-term health risks.

- **Lead:** Can harm the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Children less than 6 years old and pregnant women are at higher risk.
- **Arsenic:** Repeated exposure is associated with cancers of the skin, lung, digestive tract, liver, and kidney.
- **Benzene**: May increase the risk of developing leukemia and other blood disorders.
- **1,3-Butadiene:** Studies have shown that people who work around this chemical have an increased risk of developing leukemia.

What can you do?

- **Complete a routine history, an assessment of physical and mental development, and order the following screening laboratory tests:** CBC, comprehensive metabolic panel, urine analysis, blood lead level.
- **If the patient is uninsured:** Refer the patient to call 211 for assistance. Inform the patient that the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is offering free Blood lead level tests. They can make an appointment at 1-844-888-2290 or www.bloodleadtesting.com

Encourage Practices to Reduce Lead Exposure

- **Wash your hands and toys often.** Lower hand-to-mouth transfer of lead and dirt after playing outside and with their toys.
- **Don't let children play on or eat dirt.** Playing on grass or sand helps lower exposure to lead.
- **Take off your shoes or wipe them on a doormat before entering your home.** The dirt from your shoes may have lead.
- **Keep home clean and dust-free.** Reduce lead and dirt particles from your home.
- **Mop floors, wipe down windowsills.** Use a clean wet cloth, wash all surfaces, and vacuum often.
- **Keep your pets' paws clean.** They may be bringing lead into your home from the dirt outside.
- **Wash clothes and shoes separately.** If you have been playing in the dirt outside or if you work around lead, keep a separate bag for dirty work clothes and keep work shoes outside.
- **Grow your fruits/vegetables in containers.** If you garden, buy your soil instead of using the dirt in your yard.

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LAC DMH Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health · Health Services Los Angeles County · County of Los Angeles Public Health