



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF **HEALTH & SENIOR SERVICES**

Childhood Lead Testing Modernization

Lead exposure and poisoning in children is often difficult to see. Testing is the best way to determine if a child has been exposed to lead. Even though manufacturing of lead-based paints for homes, children's toys and household furniture was banned in the United States. Lead-based paint can still be found in many homes and apartments built before 1978. Ingesting chips or dust from deteriorating lead-based paint is a leading cause of childhood lead poisoning.

In the past, multiple testing schedules created confusion as to when a child should be tested, resulting in low testing rates, missed treatment and higher elevated blood lead levels. In August 2023, Missouri Revised Statutes 701.340-349 were updated to simplify testing schedules. A new, simplified testing schedule is outlined within this document.

There is no safe blood lead level for children

3.5_{ug/dl}

micrograms per deciliters

National lead level at the 97th percentile

8.8_{ug/dl}

micrograms per deciliters

Missouri lead level at the 97th percentile

What are the testing requirements?

- The parents of all children ≤3 will be provided education on lead hazards by their medical provider
- The parents of all children ≤3 will be given the option to test annually
- Every child ≤72 months shall be screened using a lead risk questionnaire and will be offered testing if they are determined to be at high risk for exposure

What are the benefits to Missouri?

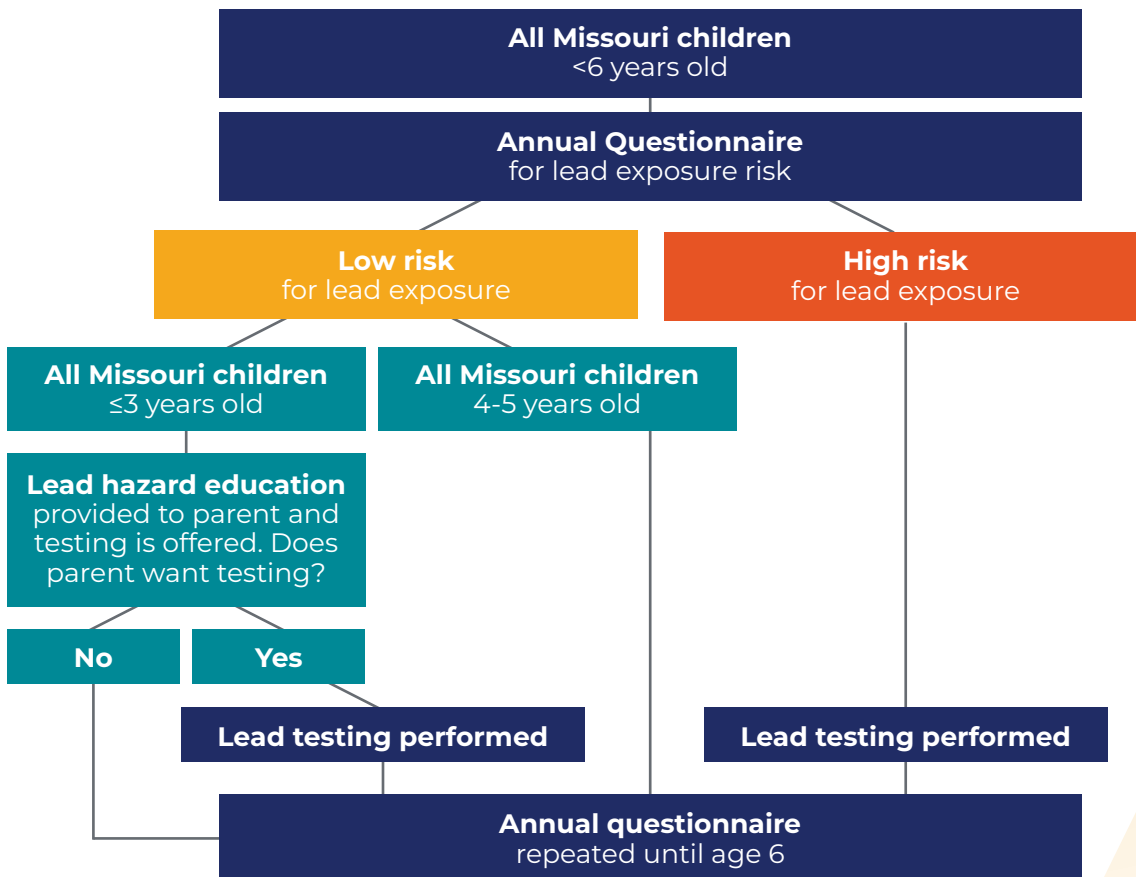
This approach is in line with the evidence-based recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

1. Improved and more consistent lead screening for Missouri children will better protect their health, safety and development
2. Routine education about lead hazards normalizes lead testing and decreases stigma associated with testing



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How will this simplify the screening process for doctors?



How does lead exposure harm children?

Lead exposure and poisoning in children is often difficult to see. Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health and is more harmful to children that are less than six years of age because their bodies are still developing and growing rapidly.

Well-documented adverse effects of lead poisoning include:

- Damage to the brain and nervous system
- Slowed growth and development
- Learning and behavior problems
- Hearing and speech problems

This can cause: lower IQ, decreased ability to pay attention and underperformance in school.