



# News Release

20 October 2019

## International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (20 to 26 October 2019) is a timely reminder for Broken Hill locals of the risks of lead exposure and how to protect themselves, their family and others in the community from lead harm.

Marion Browne, Chairperson Broken Hill Environmental Lead Program Steering Committee, said that the risk of lead exposure is an ongoing problem in the Broken Hill community.

“Lead occurs naturally in the local environment and has accumulated over many years throughout Broken Hill from past and present mining activities – it can be found in the dust, dirt and soil in and around our homes and on public land.”

Ms Browne explained that this year’s international awareness campaign is focused on ‘Ban Lead Paint’ which is significant for the Broken Hill community.

“Lead based paint is often overlooked as a source of lead exposure – especially in young children. Even though it is no longer used in Australia it can be found in and around many older homes and buildings in Broken Hill – especially those built before the 1970s.

“As lead paint ages it crumbles and creates lead contaminated flakes and dust - this can be a source of lead exposure for young children, who easily swallow it by putting their hands and other things contaminated with it in their mouth.

“Lead based paint can also be disturbed during renovations and building work and create new lead exposure risks,” said Ms Browne.

Ms Browne said that it is also timely that the international awareness campaign coincides with the warmer, spring months in Broken Hill.

“Spring in Broken Hill can increase the risks of lead exposure due to the dusty, windy weather and children starting to spend more time outdoors,” Ms Browne said.

**There are many simple things that locals can do to reduce blood lead levels and prevent harm from lead for themselves, their family and the entire community.**

- Washing hands regularly – before eating and after working or playing outside – continues to be the best way to keep lead out of our bodies and protect from lead harm
- Don’t allow children to play in bare soil and dirt areas in the backyard. Cover with grass, plants, mulch, road base, pavers or bark – this also helps to trap lead dust.
- A sandpit is a great LeadSmart area for children to play in. Make sure it can be covered every night. Keep doors and windows shut on windy dusty days to prevent lead dust getting into the living areas of our homes. Sealing up cracks in walls and ceilings is another good way to prevent lead dust getting into your home
- Rainwater should not be used for drinking, cooking or giving to your pet. Lead dust accumulates on roof tops and is washed into rainwater tanks. Change pets drinking water at least daily to prevent exposure to lead.
- Wash outside toys and play equipment regularly at this time of year and particularly after dusty days.
- Pathways and fly screens should be hosed down regularly or after dusty weather
- Spring is usually the time that families start their home improvements. Always take precautions when renovating – lead dust has accumulated over many years in roof spaces, behind walls and between and under floorboards. Be careful when working with old lead paint, seal off work areas from living areas of the house and cover furniture, toys and other household items until the job is finished.
- Be careful when working with old paint.
- Air cooler pads should be cleaned or replaced at this time of year in preparation for the warm days ahead.

**The Broken Hill Environmental Lead Program’s LeadSmart website – [www.leadsmart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.leadsmart.nsw.gov.au) – contains useful information about reducing lead exposure and risk from lead harm, from healthy eating and nutrition, to smart work practices and advice for in and around the home and across the community.**

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