### Medical Management of Lead Poisoning in Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blood Lead Level (µg/dL)*</th>
<th>Management Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;5</td>
<td>No action required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>Lead education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss possible exposures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor BLL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>Decrease exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eliminate exposure source for pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider exposure elimination for certain medical conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>Repeat BLL in 4 weeks and remove from exposure if BLL remains ≥20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perform annual lead medical exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-79</td>
<td>Eliminate exposure source for all persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prompt medical evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 80</td>
<td>Urgent medical evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chelation therapy may be indicated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the permissible blood lead level for workers in general industry is below 60µg/dL and below 50µg/dL for workers in the construction industry. At these levels, OSHA requires workers to be medically removed from the source of lead exposure. However, OSHA job protections also apply when a licensed health care provider removes an individual from lead exposure, regardless of the blood lead level, due to a lead related problem or medical condition.

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### For More Information:

**OSHA Medical Surveillance Guidelines**  

**Georgia Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**  

**Georgia Occupational Health Surveillance Program**  

### For Consultation:

**Georgia Poison Center**  
Call: 1-800-222-1222  
[georgiapoisoncenter.org](http://georgiapoisoncenter.org)

### Resources:

**Medical Management of Adult Lead Exposure**  

**Lead Toxicity**  
Who Is at Risk of Lead Exposure?  

**CSTE: Management Guidelines for Blood Lead Levels in Adults**  

**Adult Blood Lead Epidemiology and Surveillance (ABLES) Publications**  
[cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ables/publication.html](http://cdc.gov/niosh/topics/ables/publication.html)
Lead Poisoning Symptoms

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that a blood lead level (BLL) of 5 \( \mu g/dL \) or greater can result in lead poisoning. The signs and symptoms generally become more noticeable as BLLs increase and with chronic lead exposure.

Asking about Patients’ Occupation

About 90% of adult lead poisonings are caused by occupational exposures. Ask your patients if they or someone they live with works in any of these workplaces or occupations:

- Air conditioning
- Auto repair industry
- Battery manufacturing
- Construction
- Firing range and gunsmithing
- Glass manufacturing
- Law enforcement
- Lead manufacturing
- Painting
- Plastic manufacturing
- Plumbing and pipe-fitting
- Recycling of metal, electronics, and batteries
- Rubber manufacturing
- Shipbuilding
- Solid waste incinerating
- Welding

Inquiring about Patients’ Living Specifics

The following questions may aid you in identifying sources of exposure:

- Does the patient live in a home constructed before 1978? (The paint and plumbing may contain lead)
- Does the patient live in an inner-city with older rental homes?
- Does the patient live near a lead source, such as a battery recycling center?
- Does the patient live with someone with an identified elevated BLL or who works in a lead-related industry?
- Does the patient cook or store food in traditional ceramic pottery imported from Latin America or Asian countries?
- Does the patient use cosmetics imported from India, the Middle East or West Asia, such as Kohl or Surma?