Department of Health

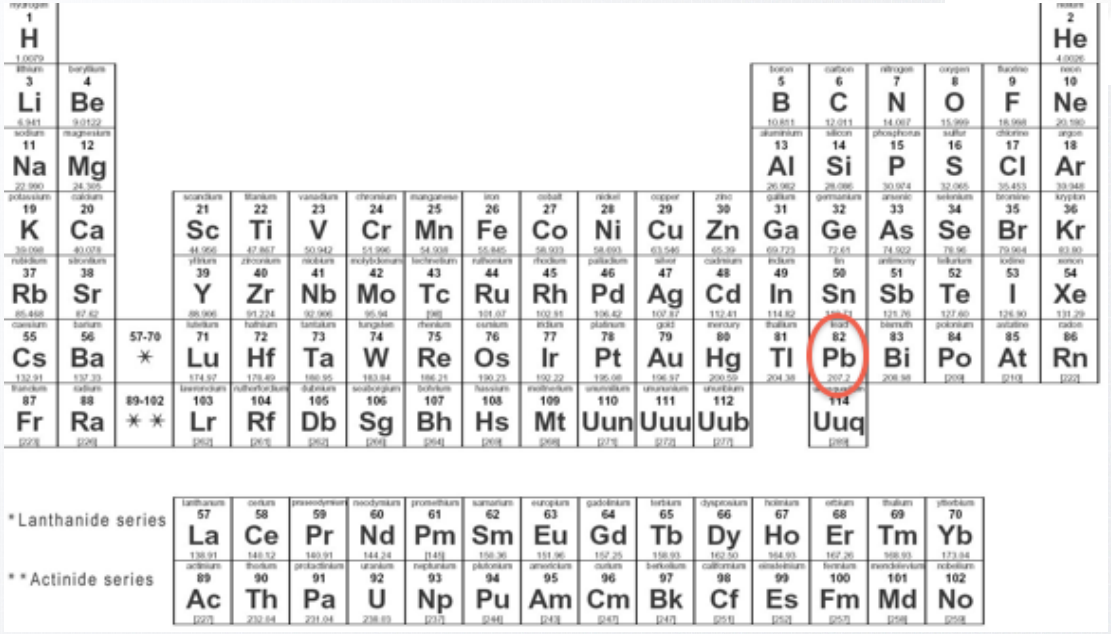
STATE OF TENNESSEE

Lead & Children's Health

Created By: Liam E. O'Rourke, MPH, REHS

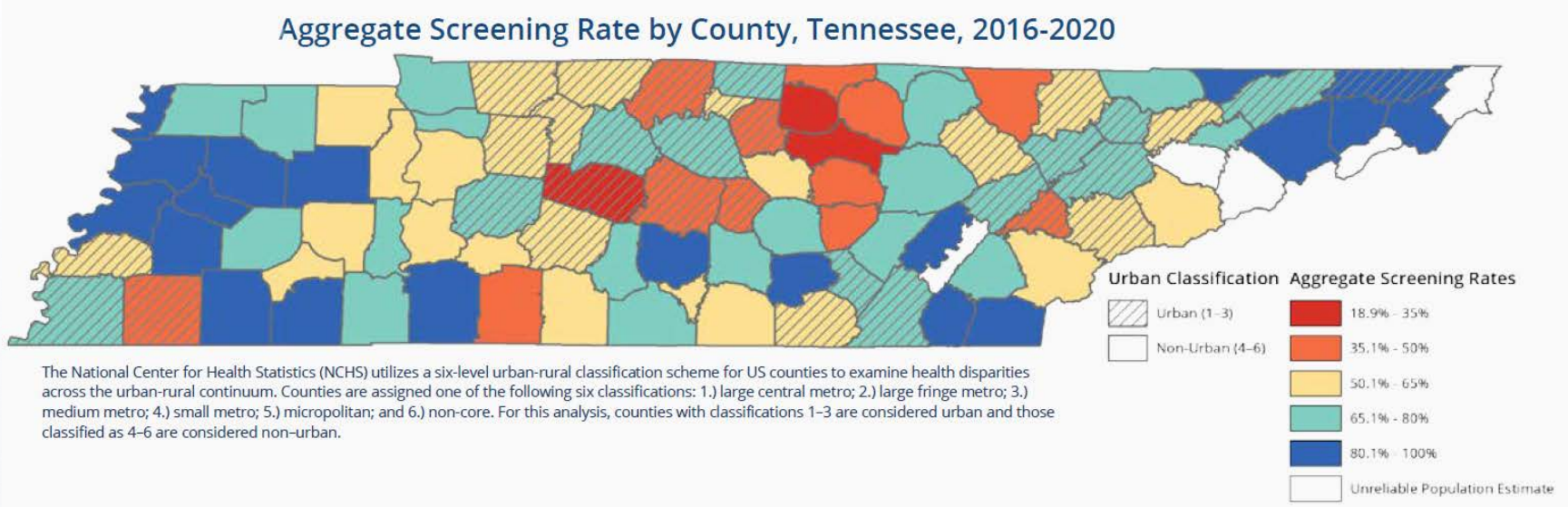
03/11/2022

What is Lead Poisoning?



- Lead is a naturally occurring element found in small amounts in the Earth's crust.
- 25% of absorbed lead is in the blood, the other 75% ends up in the structures of the body.

Lead Poisoning Levels



- During 2016–2020, non-urban children were 42% more likely to receive lead screening and were 16% more likely to have an elevated blood lead level.
- During the child's well checks at 1 years old and 2 years old a routine screening of lead in the blood should be done.

Children's Exposure to Lead

- In utero
- Ingestion
- Inhalation

Symptoms

Initially, symptoms of lead poisoning can be hard to detect. Signs and symptoms usually don't appear until dangerous amounts have accumulated.

Headaches, irritability, loss of appetite, weight loss, sluggishness and fatigue, abdominal pain, vomiting, hearing problems, anemia, kidney problems, constipation and learning difficulties.

Babies who are exposed to lead before birth may show signs of lead poisoning. Symptoms in newborns include Learning difficulties and slowed growth.

Adults Exposure

- Spending time in areas where lead-based paint is deteriorating.
- Working in a job or engaging in hobbies where lead is used, like stained glass.
- A pregnant woman's exposure can result in exposure to her developing baby.

What to do?

- Prevention:
  - Know about the sources of lead in your home.
  - Know the year your home was built. Interior plumbing installed before 1930 could contain lead. Homes built before 1978 might have been painted with lead-based paint.
  - Discourage chewing and regularly wash the hands and face, especially before meals.
  - Cleaning the home.
  - Planting grass and shrubs over areas of bare soil in the yard.
  - Make sure kids eat foods high in calcium, iron, and Vitamin C.
  - Treatment options are limited, contact your Doctor if you have a concern of lead exposure.

Contact Information

- Liam E. O'Rourke, MPH, REHS/RS

  Environmental Epidemiologist
  Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness
  Environmental Epidemiology Program

  E-Mail: Liam.ORourke@tn.gov

TN Department of Health

THANK YOU