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# SDHC tests children for lead poisoning

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A child gets tested for lead poisoning at King-Chavez Primary Academy

Young kids in Logan Heights received free blood tests for lead poisoning at King-Chavez Primary Academy today.

The tests are part of "Home Safe Home," a program by the San Diego Housing Commission to reduce the risks of lead poisoning. The SDHC partnered with the Environmental Health Coalition and La Maestra Community Health Center to administer the tests.

Many older homes in San Diego were built using lead-based materials. The most common cause of lead poisoning is inhaling dust from deteriorating lead-based paint. Doors, windows and woodwork can also contain lead.

Outreach efforts through "Home Safe Home" focus on the following communities, which are considered high-risk for lead poisoning:

- City Heights
- Linda Vista
- Logan Heights
- Sherman Heights

EHC Associate Director for Programs Leticia Ayala said children must get tested because lead poisoning is undetectable.

"It's a silent disease . . . you don't see it, you don't smell it and it could be lingering in the house," Ayala said.

She urged parents to test their children, saying the effects of lead poisoning are irreversible. Exposure to lead can result in hearing loss, stunted growth and learning disabilities.

"There really isn't a magic pill that could undo the brain damage," Ayala said. "Once the damage is done, it's done."

Ayala said children younger than six are most vulnerable to lead poisoning because they often put objects in their mouths while playing. She also said parents who work in construction should prevent lead from spreading in their homes by removing their work clothes before going inside.

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