



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Cortland County Health Department

CORTLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TO: Local Media

FROM: Nicole Anjeski, Public Health Director, Cortland County Health Department

RE: Health Department Seeks Community Member Input on Lead Poisoning Prevention, Announces 2022 National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week

DATE: 10/24/2022

Community Members Needed for Lead Poisoning Photovoice Project

The Cortland County Health Department is recruiting a small group of community members to participate in a Photovoice project aimed at better understanding the people, places, and spaces that have been, or are at risk of, being impacted by lead poisoning in the Cortland County community. The project will give community members the opportunity to provide context into the lead risks in their environment and what can be done in the future to prevent lead poisoning. Data collected will be used by Cortland County Health Department lead prevention program to inform outreach and messaging.

Individuals who have personal/family experience with lead poisoning or individuals who do not have personal/family experience with lead poisoning but live in a home/apartment built before 1978 and have children under 6 years old at home are eligible to participate. The project will involve one initial information meeting, photo collection, and one focus group. No photography experience is necessary. Participants will be provided up to \$25 in gift cards for the time they spend on the project. Interested community members should email ekromer@cortland-co.org or fill out the interest form: <https://forms.gle/1R8Li8Ga7bF7VUiWA>

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 23rd-29th)

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is October 23rd-29th, 2022. The goal is to raise awareness about lead poisoning prevention in an effort to reduce childhood exposure to lead. No safe blood lead levels have been identified in children. Exposure to lead can cause serious harm to a child's health including; damage to the brain and nervous system, slowed growth and development, learning problems, and hearing and speech problems. Protecting children from exposure to lead is important to lifelong good health.

- In 2019, Cortland County has a higher incidence of confirmed high blood lead levels (5 micrograms or higher per deciliter) than New York State (28.5 per 1,000 tested children aged



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<72 months in Cortland County compared to 12.1 per 1,000 tested children aged <72 months in New York State).

- In both Cortland County and New York State, 63.3% of children born in 2016 had at least two lead screenings by 36 months.
- Approximately 75% of homes in Cortland County were built before 1978. Homes built before 1978 are likely to contain lead based paint.

Supervising Public Health Nurse, Suzanne Osterhoudt states: “National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week serves as a reminder to our community about the importance of lead poisoning prevention. Children in our community are most often exposed to lead through chipping or peeling lead based paint commonly found in homes built before 1978. The only way to know if your child has been exposed to lead is through blood lead testing. All caregivers should make sure their child is tested for lead at age one and again at age two. If your child has a high blood lead level, you will be referred to our program automatically and our staff will provide you with case management, education, referrals, and follow up services.”