

Adult Lead Exposure Management Guidelines

New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH)

Environmental exposure to lead (all blood lead levels) is a notifiable condition in the state of New Mexico. All blood lead level (BLL) test results performed on New Mexico residents are to be reported to NMDOH.

Lead exposure can have adverse effects on various organs and systems in the body, resulting in negative health effects, both acute and chronic, depending on the level of exposure or dose, exposure duration, and other factors including dietary. In New Mexico, industries where lead exposure is common include public safety, radiator repair, mining and construction. However, non-occupational sources of lead exposure are also common in adults and include (but are not limited to) firearm hobbies, retained bullets, and the use of herbal remedies.

Recommendations for Medical Management

The first step in treatment of lead poisoning is to remove the individual from **all** sources (occupational and non-occupational) of lead exposure – this requires taking a detailed exposure history covering all potential exposure sources and pathways. The following recommendations are from Kosnett, Wedeen, Rothenburg et al. Recommendations for Medical Management of Adult Lead Exposure. *Environ Health Perspect* 115:463–471 (2007).

Blood Lead Level (µg/dL)	Management Recommendations
<5	No action needed Monitor BLL if ongoing exposure
5-9	Discuss health risks Minimize exposure Consider removal for pregnancy* and certain medical conditions Monitor BLL
10-19	Decrease exposure Remove from exposure for pregnancy Consider removal for certain medical conditions or $BLL \geq 10$ for an extended period of time Monitor BLL
20-29	Remove from exposure for pregnancy Remove from exposure if repeat BLL in 4 weeks remains ≥ 20 Annual lead medical exam recommended
30-49	Remove from exposure Prompt medical evaluation
50-79	Remove from exposure Prompt medical evaluation Consider chelation with significant symptoms
≥ 80	Remove from exposure Urgent medical evaluation Chelation may be indicated

Note: OSHA job protections apply whenever a licensed health care provider removes an individual from lead exposure due to an elevated blood lead level or a medical condition that places them at greater risk from lead exposure.

Recommendations for chelation cannot be based on hair or urinary lead levels; chelation is also not recommended for individuals with low blood lead levels or those with kidney disease and other chronic conditions.

Recommendations for Lead-Exposed Workers

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) workplace standards for lead exposure require medical surveillance criteria** to be followed, such as baseline and periodic medical examinations and laboratory testing. NM Occupational Health and Safety Bureau's State Plan follows federal OSHA standards.

*See NMDOH [Lead Exposure and Pregnancy](#) and [Pre-natal Lead Risk Questionnaire For Those Who Are Pregnant or Are Planning a Pregnancy](#)

**[Part #1910: Occupational Safety and Health Standards, subpart Z: Toxic and Hazardous Substances, #1910.1025 App C](#)

**[Part #1926: Safety and Health Regulations for Construction, subpart D: Occupational Health and Environmental Controls, #1926.62 App C](#)



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