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## LEAD

The City of Willard wishes to enhance our community by educating the public about health hazards, ways to protect our environment, encourage the use of alternative products, and promote the management of proper methods of recycling. You can make a difference that should lead to a safe, economical, healthy lifestyle, and cleaner environment.

This article is the fifth in a series of public information awareness facts about toxic substances.

This time the substance of concern is lead. The color of lead is gray and is our oldest used element. Lead is a soft and ductile element that is resistant to corrosion, and is a poor electrical conductor.

Lead is a cumulative poison. Problems associated with lead is when it is ingested or dispersed into the air which can lead to health problems if inhaled; and when it enters water lead is highly toxic to aquatic life, animal, and humans.

The four most common ways people are exposed to any form of lead is by drinking water high in lead, from containers made of lead, by inhaling dust that contains lead, or by eating dust, soil, or paint chips.

Lead poisoning can occur in both unborn and children, and even adults. If not detected early, children especially under the age of six with high levels of lead may suffer damage to the brain and nervous system, behavior problems like hyperactivity, slowed growth, hearing problems, and headaches.

Adults, both men and women, can have reproductive problems, high blood pressure and hypertension, nerve disorders, memory and concentration problems, and muscle and joint pain. People concerned about exposure to lead should consult their physician.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has through the years recognized the need for lower lead discharge limits. Testing for lead started out by analyzing data in parts per million, and now parts per billion. Parts per billion is one thousand times lower than parts per million.

The City has continued to demonstrate to Ohio EPA that our wastewater discharge level for lead is very low. Our last lead annual average wastewater discharge was below detectable levels, or less than two parts per billion. Because lead in our discharge is low, Ohio EPA requires us to only monitor for lead once per quarter. You may wonder what one part per billion means in terms of the amount

water. Parts per billion are 1,000,000,000 and are equal to about one drop in about fourteen thousand gallons of water.

Lead can be found as a pure element in fishing sinkers, vehicle wheel weights, and lead bullets. Lead is used as a sound and vibration absorber, to coat certain candle wicks, coolant, ballast, electrodes, containers to store corrosives, and radioactive shielding. Lead may also be found in compounds like old leaded gasoline and antifriction products, paint, insecticides, vehicle batteries, emergency and exit light batteries, plumbing solder and brass fixtures, pewter, flint and stained glass, leaded crystal, old toys and old furniture.

Items manufactured outside the United States are more likely to contain higher levels of lead. Examples of imported products that may be high in lead are toys, jewelry, makeup, pottery, dishes, and mugs.

Please note that in 1978, lead paint was banned in the United States. In 1986, the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed that banned lead drinking water pipes, lead plumbing solder, and lead flux that are connected to public water supply systems.

If you are unsure that your home contains safe levels of lead, you may want to contact Ohio EPA or Health Department, or consult a certified lead inspector. Here is a general rule of thumb. The older the home is, the more likely it is to contain lead as follows: 90% of pre-1940 buildings have lead; 80% of pre-1960; and 62% of pre-1978 buildings has lead.

You can do your part to help our community by substituting products to new ones free of lead. You may want to check labels to see if lead is present and what country the product was manufactured. These are just a few examples. Recycle your old lead products if possible.

The City offers residents a free of charge way to recycle products that are made of lead such as lead sinkers, vehicle wheel weights, paint, and all types of batteries. These items may be recycled the first Wednesday of each month from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the City of Willard, Water Pollution Control Plant, 7 B & O Pike East. For more information, please call 419-933-7515.