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**National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week is Oct. 24-30**

TALK Official: 'Even Low Levels of Lead in a Child's Blood Can be Dangerous'

**(MURFREESBORO)** — Oct. 24-30 is designated as National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week, and MTSU's Tennessee Alliance for Lead-safe Kids program wants people across the state to know the risks and take precautions.

"The only way to know of lead exposure is through a simple blood test, and even low levels of lead in a child's blood can be dangerous," said Leigh Woodcock, TALK/TN LEAP East coordinator in Knoxville.

"The target audience for TALK's lead-poisoning prevention efforts is parents, but also anyone (child care or health care providers) who works with children under 6," Woodcock said.

Effects of childhood lead poisoning can include lowered IQ points, developmental and growth delays, learning disabilities, violent and aggressive behavior and coma or even death, researchers have determined.

Unless they have been exposed to lead hazards, children should be tested at 12 and 24 months of age. Parents and guardians should talk to their pediatrician or local health department officials about any concerns, Woodcock said.

Children are exposed to lead through peeling and chipping paint in homes built before 1978; through lead dust from paint in homes built before 1978; through some older water pipes, mini blinds, imported toys, hobbies, home remedies and jewelry; and in utero (the uterus), where lead can be passed from the mother to her unborn child.

"There is a great concern for lead poisoning from imported goods, and rightly so, but many are unaware of the lead in their own homes that could poison their children," Woodcock said. "It's our goal at TALK and TN LEAP to help parents take the very simple steps to protect their kids."

In Tennessee, more than 1 million homes were built before 1978, increasing the likelihood that lead-based paint hazards may exist, TALK and TN Leap officials report.

Housing and Urban Development grant programs at MTSU can assist families in various ways:

- TALK offers outreach and education about the dangers and prevention of childhood lead poisoning; and
- TN LEAP has grant funding to help identify and clean up lead-based paint hazards in pre-1978 homes of those who qualify.

Childhood lead poisoning is 100 percent preventable, TALK and TN LEAP officials say. For information on how to protect your child or children in your care and request assistance, please call 865-244-4350 or go online to [mtsu.edu/talk](http://mtsu.edu/talk).

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Founded in 1911, Middle Tennessee State University is a Tennessee Board of Regents institution located in Murfreesboro and is the state's largest public undergraduate institution. MTSU now boasts one of the nation's first master's degree programs in horse science, and the Council of Graduate Schools in Washington, D.C., acclaims MTSU's Master of Science in Professional Science degree—the only one in Tennessee—as a model program. This fall, MTSU unveiled three new doctoral degrees in the sciences.

For MTSU news and information, go online to [mtsunews.com](http://mtsunews.com).

# National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week



865-244-2430 [www.mtsu.edu/talk](http://www.mtsu.edu/talk)



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