



## Effects of Hurricane Katrina on Children’s Blood Lead Levels

Children’s blood lead levels are not likely to increase as a result of the hurricane even though lead levels in some flood water exceeded drinking water standards. Purifying water by boiling does not remove lead. However, children are unlikely to drink large amounts of flood water, and inorganic lead is not absorbed through the skin except in tiny amounts.

### Topics of concern

- Some parents of children with elevated blood lead levels might request blood lead testing at the evacuation centers. These requests should be accommodated if at all possible.
- Children cannot give lead poisoning to other children.
- Concerns about potential lead exposure should not interfere with meeting the housing needs of displaced families. Lead programs across the country and at CDC can provide information about measures that reduce the chance of lead exposure. Information can also be found at [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead).

When cleanup in the affected areas begins, lead-painted building components should be disposed of carefully. To avoid widespread lead contamination and exposure, these components should not be burned in open areas. In addition, surfaces containing lead-based paint should not be cleaned by uncontrolled sanding or scraping.

### Children With Elevated Blood Lead Levels in States Affected by Hurricane Katrina, 1997–2003

Year	State	Number of Children Tested	Total Number of Children with Confirmed BLLs $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$	Confirmed BLLs $\geq 10 \mu\text{g/dL}$ as Percent of Children Tested
1997	Alabama	22,875	1,501	6.56
1998		17,827	988	5.54
1999		17,660	549	3.11
2000		13,719	315	2.30
2001		12,107	642	5.30
2002		22,495	454	2.02
2003		21,307	503	2.36
1997	Louisiana	N/A	N/A	N/A
1998		23,168	551	2.38
1999		21,587	690	3.20
2000		30,805	1,023	3.32
2001		44,458	1,061	2.39
2002		54,205	1,044	1.93
2003		61,668	982	1.59

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Year	State	Number of Children Tested	Total Number of Children with Confirmed BLLs $\geq$ 10 $\mu$ g/dL	Confirmed BLLs $\geq$ 10 $\mu$ g/dL as Percent of Children Tested
1997	Mississippi	545	520	95.41
1998		890	485	54.49
1999		7,945	767	9.65
2000		11,107	169	1.52
2001		16,771	435	2.59
2002		26,258	525	2.00
2003		36,882	520	1.41
1997	Texas	1,286	50	3.89
1998		877	24	2.74
1999		960	61	6.35
2000		12,380	352	2.84
2001		172,397	1,741	1.01
2002		N/A	N/A	N/A
2003		252,036	1,798	0.71

BLL=blood lead level;  $\mu$ g/dL= micrograms per deciliter; N/A=not available.

For more information, visit [www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/hurricanes),  
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).