

2500 McClellan Avenue  
Suite 250  
Pennsauken, NJ  
08109-4610

(856) 665-6000 Phone  
(856) 665-7711 FAX

Judy Donlen, RN, DNSc, JD  
Executive Director

Gwen Heaney-Cutts  
President, Board of Directors



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Beth Wilkinson  
Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative  
856-665-6000, x214  
[bwilkinson@snjpc.org](mailto:bwilkinson@snjpc.org)

August 17, 2007

## TOYS NOT THE ONLY SOURCE OF LEAD PAINT TO WORRY ABOUT

Many Homes Contaminated with Lead Paint Dust  
FREE Resources Available to Test Your Home

Recent, high-profile recalls of lead-tainted children's toys have many parents combing toy chests for suspect items. What they may not know is that there is another common source of lead contamination in homes that also deserves attention.

The dust from lead paint, often used in homes built before 1978, is a significant hazard.

This dust is so fine it is invisible to the eye.

"You can't see it, taste it, or smell it, but lead dust is highly toxic, especially to children and pregnant women," says Merle Weitz, Director of Lead Initiatives at the Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC).

Weitz directs the Wipe Out Lead NJ program, funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, which provides free, do-it-yourself, home testing kits to screen for lead paint dust. Kits are available to New Jersey residents by calling 856-665-6000.

"With a simple dust wipe test you can detect lead in your home," says Weitz. "Test samples are sent to a certified laboratory that can analyze lead dust levels from just two samples—one from the doorway of your home, and another from a windowsill. Results are available within two weeks."

The Wipe Out Lead test is a preliminary, screening step to identify potential risk. Those with positive results are advised to pursue a more complete assessment to determine the full extent of the problem as well as the best remediation strategies.

State assistance is available to address these hazards. Low-interest loans are available to any New Jersey property owners whose buildings test positive for lead. At certain income levels, these loans may actually be forgiven.

Atlantic City Medical Center,  
Mainland Divisions

Cape Regional Medical Center

Cooper Health System

Deborah Heart and Lung Center

Kennedy Health Systems,  
Washington Township Campus

Lourdes Medical Center  
of Burlington County

Our Lady of Lourdes  
Medical Center

Shore Memorial Hospital

South Jersey Healthcare-  
Elmer Hospital

South Jersey Healthcare-  
Regional Medical Center

The Memorial Hospital  
of Salem County

Underwood-Memorial Hospital

Virtua Memorial Hospital  
Burlington County

Virtua West Jersey Hospital  
Voorhees

The “Lead Safe Families” program, also under the direction of SNJPC, provides hands-on help in applying for state assistance dollars, which many families find extremely helpful,” says Weitz.

Weitz encourages parents who live in homes built before 1978 to obtain a Wipe Out Lead testing kit.

“Even a tiny amount of lead can have long-lasting consequences for infants and children,” she says. “It affects their behavior, learning, and growth, and can lead to long-term problems like hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder (ADD), and learning disabilities.”

Any building constructed before 1978—when lead-based paint was outlawed nationwide—probably contains lead-based paint. Every county in New Jersey is home to at least 10,000 properties threatened by lead contamination.

Fortunately, parents can determine whether their children have elevated lead levels with a simple blood test.

“Every child should be screened at one and two years old, and any time thereafter if parents are concerned about lead exposure,” says Weitz. “Pregnant women can be sure their homes are lead-safe before bringing new babies into them.”

If parents have concerns about a recalled toy, Weitz says, they should talk to their healthcare provider about a blood test to determine the child’s lead levels. The next step is to test the family home for the presence of lead.

Creating lead-safe homes is a major goal of the Lead Safe Families and Wipe Out Lead New Jersey programs. These primary prevention initiatives, funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, educate state residents about the hazards of lead poisoning.

“The toy recalls can be alarming,” says Weitz, “but New Jersey parents are fortunate to live in a state that has made childhood lead poisoning prevention a top priority.”

For a free lead dust testing kit or more information, call Lead Safe Families toll-free at 888-722-2903.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Wipe Out Lead New Jersey (WOLNJ) and Lead Safe Families (LSF) are lead poisoning prevention initiatives funded by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Lead Education and Outreach Program. WOLNJ has been identified as a best practices model for lead poisoning prevention by the Children’s Health Forum. It was also recognized by the National Lead and Environmental Hazard Association as a national model for primary prevention of residence-based childhood lead poisoning.*

*The Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative (SNJPC) is the state-licensed, non-profit, maternal-child health consortium serving the seven southernmost counties of New Jersey. SNJPC programs and services are dedicated to improving health outcomes for mothers and babies in South Jersey. For more information about the Cooperative or its services, call 856-665-6000 or visit [snjpc.org](http://snjpc.org).*