



News Release

For Release: May 1, 2008

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AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS PRAISES EPA FOR PROPOSAL TO TOUGHEN AIRBORNE LEAD STANDARDS

Washington, D.C.—The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), representing 60,000 pediatricians, praised the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today for proposing to lower the acceptable level of airborne lead allowed under the Clean Air Act, a move that will protect the health and well-being of the nation's children.

“EPA’s action today is a step in the right direction for our children,” said Helen Binns, MD, FAAP, chair of the AAP Committee on Environmental Health. “There is no ‘safe’ level of blood lead in children. Exposure to lead can cause cognitive damage and behavioral issues. We applaud the EPA for recognizing the need to monitor and reduce children’s exposures to airborne lead.”

Studies have shown that lead, once it enters a child’s body, it is stored in the bones for years. Ongoing exposure has been linked to loss of IQ points, higher rates of behavioral and attention problems, and reading disabilities. As a result, children with elevated blood lead levels are less likely to graduate from high school and lead healthy, productive lives.

“The EPA proposal to reduce the allowable standard to as low as 0.10 micrograms per cubic liter of air shows a clear understanding that lead exposure has serious health consequences, particularly for children,” Binns said.

As the EPA develops its final airborne lead standards, AAP urges the agency to set a standard that is as protective as possible of children’s health. “We have the technology and ability to substantially decrease the amount of airborne lead—and we should,” Binns said. “Given the toxicity of lead, our nation needs to decisively act to protect children from this toxin.”

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.