

HOT TOPIC

CHIP: REQUIRED LEAD BLOOD TEST REIMBURSABLE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK!

One of Highmark’s primary concerns is supporting members overall good health, including those just getting started. Pennsylvania Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) requires that all members’ ages 9 months to 2 years have at least one lead blood test that can be performed during the routine wellness and developmental screening visits. These are preventive reimbursable benefits with no out-of-pocket costs for these members.

Did you know?

Completing the lead blood test is easy! It can be completed with the routine hemoglobin test performed at 12 months for anemia per Bright Futures™. Even better news: no blood draw is required. Simply complete one finger stick for both the hemoglobin and lead tests. Finally, the lead blood test and developmental screening test are reimbursable if submitted using procedure codes 83655 and 96110, respectively.

We understand, since symptoms may not be readily identifiable in infants and those under one year of age, parents may be hesitant to request or permit the test, even if you discuss it with them. However, lead poisoning is a serious matter with potential mental and physical symptoms not showing up until several years later. These symptoms, which may be more difficult to treat later in the child’s life, include but are not limited to:

| Symptoms |
|--|
| Developmental Delay (Testing discussed later in article.) |
| Learning Difficulties |
| Seizures |
| Hearing Loss |
| Irritability |
| Weight Loss |
| Sluggishness and Fatigue |
| Loss of Appetite |
| Abdominal Pain |
| Vomiting |

Next, a developmental screening is also recommended. It can assist in early detection of autism, learning disabilities, and developmental delays. As stated, this test is also reimbursable, with no out-of-pocket member costs, if billed using procedure code: 96110.

Quality care– tying the testing together:

- **Lead Blood Test:** Lead poisoning isn't simply a paint-related issue that occurs only from old houses any longer. Lead poisoning can come from other places where children play, like old water pipes, soil that is then tracked into the house, or even from the child's favorite toys.
- **Developmental Screenings:** Subsequently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently encouraged pediatricians and PCPs to follow American Academy of Pediatric guidelines for screening children 3 years of age and younger for developmental disabilities. This occurred due to 2014 findings that 17 out of every 20 children in the Autism and Developmental Disability Monitoring Network had a developmental concern by the age of three. Of this number, only 8 of every 20 children had undergone a developmental evaluation by that same age.

Early screenings are among the best resources to rule out or expedite treatment if it is identified. As mentioned, there is minimized pain since no secondary blood draw is required for the lead blood test. Highmark does understand parents may choose to shelter their children from painful situations if they don't see obvious signs of health related concerns.

For this reason Highmark is providing the following CDC web resources. This information may prove beneficial when discussing these topics with parents during testing visits and/or in preparation for upcoming appointments. Parents who understand potential health concerns are better equipped to make informed decisions related to the welfare of their children.

- [What Do Parents Need to Know to Protect Their Children?](#)
- [Blood Lead Levels in Children Fact Sheet: What Do Parents Need to Know to Protect Their Children?](#)
- [Prevention Tips](#)

Highmark appreciates the quality care you provide to our members, your patients. Working together, we can achieve more effective patient outcomes.