

More than half of US children have detectable levels of lead in their blood

More than half of children under 6 years old in the U.S. had detectable lead levels in their blood, with exposures much higher from children in communities with pre-1950s housing or with public insurance or high poverty rates, a new study found.

Why it matters: The study, published in the peer-reviewed [JAMA Pediatrics](#) on [September 27], is the first known national analysis investigating the “association of lead exposure with individual- and community-level factors.”

The big picture: A blood lead concentration as [low as five micrograms per deciliter](#) can affect the long-term cognitive development of children.

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What to watch: The Environmental Protection Agency on [\[September 27\]](#) announced it will train contractors working in low-income and other underserved neighborhoods for free on how to rid pre-1970s housing from lead.

- Lead-based paint and the dust it produces as it wears down remains the predominant source of children’s lead exposure.
- The Biden administration also proposed this year to remove and replace all lead water pipes across the U.S.

The bottom line: Although lead exposures have [significantly decreased](#) since the 1970s after it was removed from gasoline and new paint, harmful [exposure persists](#).

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