



Susan D. Harrington, M.S., R.D.
Director

Date: October 10, 2008

Released by: Florence Neglia, Director
Health Promotion and
Professional Development
(951) 358-7170

Contact: Jonathan Espiritu, PHN
Child Health Programs
(951) 358-5481

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Lead Poisoning Prevention Week Reminds Parents
of the Importance of Blood Lead Testing**

Maria didn't mean to poison her children. The young Riverside County mother was merely cooking her delicious "frijoles de la olla" in a clay pot handed down to her by her mother and grandmother.

What Maria did not know then, but now will never forget, is that the brightly painted clay pot was coated, inside and out, with a lead-based glaze that released lead into her delicious beans as they cooked. Fortunately, doctors detected the high levels of the toxic metal in her children's blood during a routine checkup a week later.

Lead poisoning can seriously affect a child's brain and nervous system. It can cause learning and behavioral problems. A blood lead test is the only way to identify and confirm lead poisoning in children.

Children get lead poisoned by ingesting lead-contaminated dust, paint chips from deteriorating lead-based paint, and lead-contaminated soil. Lead can also be found in lead pipes or solder, imported or older ceramics and pottery, certain hobbies, and folk medicines. In 2007, 192 children in Riverside County between the ages of 0-18 years of age were identified with elevated blood lead levels.

October 19-25 is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Awareness Week. "The purpose of this awareness campaign is to remind parents that lead poisoning can be detrimental to your children's health and development. It's important for parents to ask their child's doctor about lead testing", states Dr. Eric Frykman, the county health officer.

For more information about lead poisoning or to find events in your community, please call Riverside County Department of Public Health~ Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at: **1.800.346.6520**; or visit our website at: <http://www.rivcoph.org/cms/lead.htm>

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