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**DATE:** June 28, 2017  
**TO:** WIC Coordinators  
**FROM:** Nutrition & Clinic Services Unit  
**SUBJECT:** Lead in Infant Foods

Research by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) has found detectable levels of lead in a number of infant foods. The report notes that “roughly 20% of baby food samples were found to contain lead”, with infant fruit juice samples containing the highest amounts. This study has been covered by multiple media, including on National Public Radio. (For a summary of the report, see [AAP News Report](#) ). You may get questions from participants.

Below are recommendations from MDH’s Environmental Health staff and possible messages you might use with participants.

## **MDH’s Environmental Health Recommendations**

The recommendation is to limit exposure to lead from *any* and *all* potential sources. None of the food samples tested were above FDA limits for lead. And although those limits are being re-evaluated, there are no product alerts or recalls based on this sampling. Additionally, given the nutritive value and health benefits of many of the foods tested, the nutrition benefit needs to be weighed against the relative risk of the exposure to lead. There are other health-based reasons for limiting juice consumption.

In Minnesota, among young children, the primary source of lead exposure comes from paint dust in their homes. The second most common source of lead is dust brought home from a parent’s job or hobby.

## **Messages for WIC Participants:**

1. Avoid infant fruit juices, and limit other juices.
2. Eat a variety of foods, to minimize risks from a single food.
3. Provide age-appropriate portion sizes.
4. Ask their health care provider about recommended lead testing.

## **For Additional Information:**

- The EDF has a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document about lead in foods.
- The [Minnesota Department of Health website](#) has lead factsheets, guidelines, education materials and resources available. See: [MDH Childhood Lead Exposure Brochure](#)