

City Archives Balt. City Health Dept 1970
Weekly Letters to the Mayor

Baltimore City Health Department
WEEKLY LETTER TO THE MAYOR

APR 23 1970

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In his WEEKLY LETTER TO THE MAYOR dated April 24, 1970, the Commissioner of Health wrote:

Dear Mayor:

It is a pleasure to report that so far this year there have been no cases of lead paint poisoning reported in the city. This compares very favorably with the record of five cases reported by the same time last year. There is, however, an ever present danger that with the coming of warmer weather lead paint poisoning cases will be reported, since most cases occur during the months with higher temperatures.

So far in 1970 nine cases of elevated blood lead in children have been discovered. This indicates that there are still places in Baltimore where a child can ingest lead paint, even though the amount ingested before discovery was not sufficient to cause poisoning symptoms.

If a child eats a sufficient amount of lead paint he will show such signs of poisoning as pains in the abdomen, nausea and vomiting, irritability, lack of interest or persistent constipation. As the child continues to eat paint, he develops frequent headaches and finally convulsions which can result in death.

Waiting for the appearance of such symptoms is dangerous, because they are an indication that poisoning has set in and the baby's body, physically and mentally is being damaged. Parents are urged to watch their children and if the child is seen eating paint or plaster either from the walls, woodwork or repainted household items such as chairs and cribs, they should take the child to a doctor or clinic right away. Early discovery can prevent the damage to the child's health that lead paint poisoning can bring.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Robert E. Farber, M.D.

Commissioner of Health

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