



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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KAITLAN BASTON, MD, MSc, DFASAM
Acting Commissioner

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

Dear Local Health Partners,

UPDATE: The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has identified high levels of chromium, in addition to lead, in some cinnamon samples and apple cinnamon puree pouches. Chromium is a naturally occurring element with trace levels normally found in the diet. Chromium comes in multiple forms with toxicity usually occurring after long term, occupational exposure through inhalation. The exact form of chromium in the recalled applesauce products is unclear. However, lead chromate has previously been reported as a contaminant in spices and foods.

There is limited information about the health effects related to the consumption of chromium compounds found in food; however, when it is consumed in large amounts it may result in symptoms such as abdominal discomfort, ulcers (in the stomach and small intestine) and anemia. Medical treatment for chromium exposure focuses on treating the symptoms. While the health effects of chromium are difficult to predict, there is no safe level of lead in the body.

In light of the recent identification of chromium in the cinnamon applesauce recall, please find below the **updated** Standard Operating Procedure for the foodborne outbreak investigation. The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), Childhood Lead Program (CLP) has outlined an expedited response to the investigation of all elevated blood lead levels related to the recall. When reporting the exposure, please be sure to communicate the suspected case(s) with the CLP using the *New Jersey Local Health Department Applesauce Recall* spreadsheet attached. The spreadsheet must be emailed to the CLP email address at clpp.fhs@doh.nj.gov.

Standard Operating Procedure for the Identification of Recall-related Elevated Blood Lead Levels

For all reported cases of elevated blood lead levels due to exposure from the recalled products:

1. Make telephone contact with the family within 5 days of receiving the blood lead level via Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS).
2. During telephone conversation, conduct the Lead Hazard Assessment Questionnaire **and** ask the following screening questions:
 - a) Has the child ingested the **recalled products**?
 1. If yes, when was the last date of consumption?

3. If the child consumed the recalled product(s), please encourage the family to reach out to their healthcare provider and/or contact NJPIES (1-800-222-1222) for further guidance on possible chromium exposure.
 - a) There is no specific antidote to treat chromium exposure, and there is no evidence to support the use of chelation therapy.
4. Please send written communication to the family regarding chromium exposure using the template provided by NJDOH.
5. If the child has consumed the recalled products, please complete the *New Jersey Local Health Department Applesauce Recall* spreadsheet and send to the CLP email address at (clpp.fhs@doh.nj.gov). Ensure your agency reports any suspected cases to the CLP **within 3 days** of identification of a suspected exposure.
6. Once the child has been identified as having consumed the recalled product(s), schedule the initial home visit as early as available. It is strongly encouraged to make this visit a joint investigation with both the nurse case manager and lead inspector/risk assessor.
 - a) The case shall be listed as *Person Under Investigation (PUI)* while additional information is being obtained during the case management and environmental investigations.
 - b) Below is a table and flowchart listing the case definitions. Case definitions, as per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), may be subject to change. If such changes occur, the CLP team shall immediately notify the Health Officer of each jurisdiction via email.
7. If the child has not consumed the recalled products, please continue to follow case management protocols, as prescribed in N.J.A.C. 8:51.

Sincerely,

NJDOH Childhood Lead Program

www.nj.gov/health/childhoodlead

clpp.fhs@doh.nj.gov

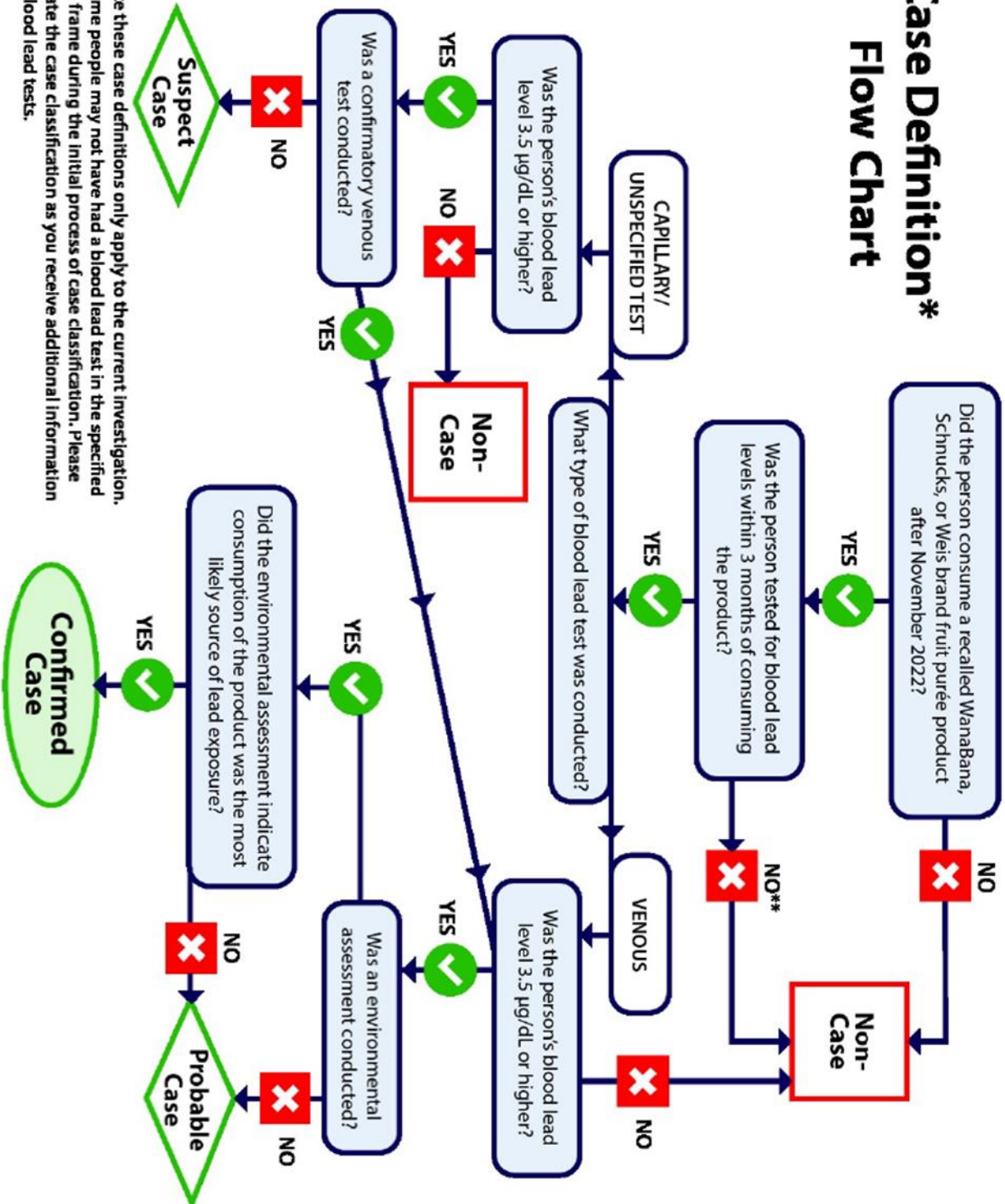
609-633-2937

Please note: The spreadsheet must be shared to the CLP email by 12pm every Thursday.

EXCEPTIONS - If there are no suspected cases within your jurisdiction and/or no additional updates to your investigation, the spreadsheet does not need to be sent.

Case Definitions	
Confirmed case:	<p>Blood lead levels of 3.5 µg/dL or higher confirmed through venous testing in a person within 3 months after consuming a recalled WanaBana, Schnucks, or Weis brand fruit purée product after November 2022 AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A follow-up environmental assessment to determine potential sources of lead exposure was completed (consult with state lead poisoning prevention program as needed). <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The environmental assessment results indicated no other significant sources of lead exposure.
Probable case:	<p>Blood lead levels of 3.5 µg/dL or higher confirmed through venous testing in a person within 3 months after consuming a recalled WanaBana, Schnucks, or Weis brand fruit purée product after November 2022 AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A follow-up environmental assessment was not completed. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. A follow-up environmental assessment was completed, but the environmental assessment results indicated other potential sources of lead exposure.
Suspect case:	<p>Blood lead levels of 3.5 µg/dL or higher detected through capillary or unspecified testing, not yet confirmed via venous blood testing, in a person within 3 months after consuming a recalled WanaBana, Schnucks, or Weis brand fruit purée product after November 2022.</p>
Non-case:	<p>A person who meets one of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The person did not consume a recalled WanaBana, Schnucks, or Weis brand fruit purée product after November 2022 (irrespective of BLL results). <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The person consumed a recalled WanaBana, Schnucks, or Weis brand fruit purée product after November 2022 but the confirmatory test result was less than 3.5 µg/dL.

Case Definition* Flow Chart



*Note these case definitions only apply to the current investigation.
 **Some people may not have had a blood lead test in the specified time frame during the initial process of case classification. Please update the case classification as you receive additional information on blood lead tests.