

Happytown, USA is a richly diverse town that embraces people from all over the globe, welcoming cultural norms from the young and the old generations, and of native North Americans and new immigrants. The town itself has affordable housing to meet everyone's wants and needs. Every year, Happytown hosts a New Residents Day event to formally welcome all new residents and to build a community of inclusion and togetherness.

1. Recently, there has been concern about possible lead exposure/lead poisoning happening within the community of Happytown. Public health officials completed an investigation during the annual New Residents Day festivities and discovered five sources of lead for lead exposure. The following describes these sources:

Children's face painting: Face painting using Tiro is very popular with the kids. Tiro is a lead-based cosmetic used in parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The lead in Tiro can be absorbed through the children's skin.

Second-hand toys: Each child attending the event receives 2 sets of toys. A musical instrument set and rubber critter toys. These toys could be manufactured in other countries that don't have regulations pertaining to lead. There is potential for ingestion and absorption if these toys contain lead paint.

Lead in food: Buford's Restaurant offers fresh venison and small game from the local Buckshot Buddies Hunting Club. Most buckshot contain lead, therefore exposing those who consume the meat to lead ingestion.

Low-cost apartment homes: These apartment homes were built in the 1940s and 1950s prior to the ban of sale of lead paint in 1978. Old, chipping paint, both indoor and outdoor can create a lead exposure hazard.

Historic home renovation: The historic homes built in the 1930s are more expensive and financially capable homeowners are encouraged to self-renovate their historic homes to keep Happytown looking fresh and well-kept. Similarly, to the low-cost apartment homes, self-renovating without proper knowledge of a lead hazard poses risk for exposure.

The housing situation, both the low-cost apartments and the more expensive historic downtown homes, is going to impact the most people within Happytown. The Tiro face-painting, second-hand toys, and fresh shot game occur once a year during the welcoming festivities. Housing, however, is very long term, and the exposure to lead paint, paint dust, paint chips will happen daily to entire families.

2. Without proper education, certain practices will continue within certain cultures of the community. The cultures that introduced the Tiro painting for New Residents Day may be continuing that practice within their households more frequently. These members don't know that the cosmetic is dangerous because it is a traditional practice in their culture. The members of Buckshot Buddies may be consuming their small game shots weekly in their households simply because it is a familiar way to live off of the land, and has been passed down from generation to generation. Families with children in lower income homes may have children that only have the toys from the New Residents Day festival, and are therefore more exposed by daily play, in addition to lead paint in the low-income apartment.

3. While designing a communication strategy for lead poisoning in Happytown, it's critical to be sensitive of the cultures and beliefs of the community and community leaders. Effective risk communication consists of a two-way exchange of information. This type of communication empowers the community to take action for their health. To begin, public health officials will first meet with community leaders to discuss the findings of the investigation. It is important that the public health professionals and community leaders have a cooperative partnership in this matter, to further protect the members of the community. Together, the public health officials and community leaders will create a plan to effectively communicate the information about the risks and risk mitigation for lead poisoning to the members of the town.

Before bringing the entire community together, several smaller educational Town Halls will be hosted. These meetings will be specific to the sources of lead exposure, and all Town Halls will be presented in an understood language, which may require translators. There will be a housing Town Hall that provides information to renters and homeowners about lead-based paint in both low-cost apartments and high-cost historic homes. Along with the information explaining the risk, protective actions that both financial classes of members will be able to take to safeguard their families from lead paint exposure will be provided. A question-and-answer session will follow the meeting.

Another Town Hall will be held for those members of Buckshot Buddies or other hunters that use lead ammunition for their own small game that they consume. Restaurant owners will also be invited. This meeting is aimed at informing the hunters and restaurant owners of the risk in using lead ammunition in food sources and provide information on alternative ammunition. A question-and-answer session will follow the meeting.

A third Town Hall will be held for those community members that use Tiro as a cosmetic or for medical purposes. This meeting will be focused on educating these members about the contents of Tiro and the risk it poses to children and adults. Community leaders will provide suggestions for alternative, safe cosmetics that have the same appeal. A question-and-answer session will follow the meeting.

After ensuring all members of the community could attend the specific Town Halls, an all-inclusive community Town Hall will be held. Here, the entire risk and mitigation strategy will be discussed in a controlled environment where all community members will be able to ask questions and provide input, feedback, and help develop the next New Resident Day with safe alternatives in place. Also, the community leaders may suggest a community team to develop a list of affordable, credible Lead Safe renovators in the area for homes needing safe renovation.

All of the above-mentioned Town Halls are meant to create an environment of empowering through knowledge rather than insinuating fault for dangerous practices that have occurred year after year. This element is important to support the community and maintain the inclusion and togetherness of Happytown. It allows for each member of the community to take action in creating a healthier town.