

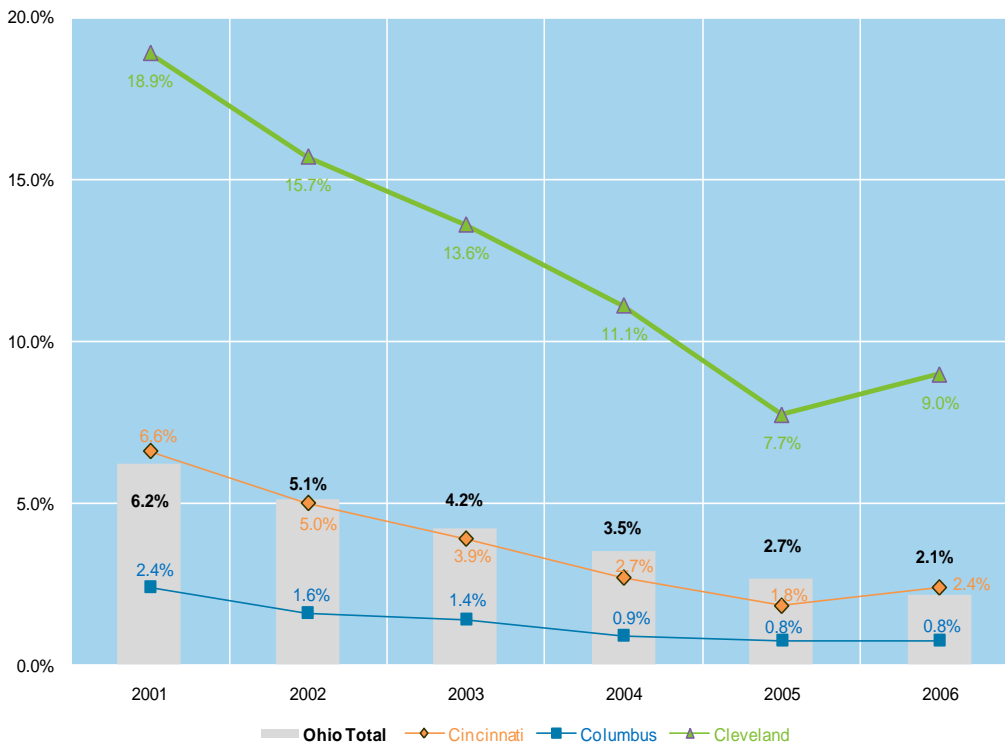
Childhood Lead Poisoning

Table 1. Children Age 0-72 Months Screened and Determined to Have Elevated Blood Lead Levels; Franklin County, 1997-2006

Year Screened	# Screened	# Screened with Elevated Blood Levels (EBL)	% of Children Screened with EBL
1997	11,408	635	5.6%
1998	11,048	455	4.1%
1999	10,039	406	4.0%
2000	10,046	180	1.8%
2001	8,989	168	1.9%
2002	11,224	145	1.3%
2003	11,520	133	1.2%
2004	11,038	88	0.8%
2005	12,177	84	0.7%
2006	13,606	82	0.6%

- The number of Franklin County children aged 0–72 months determined to have elevated blood levels of lead decreased nearly 90% from 1997 (635 children, or 5.6% of the 11,408 children screened that year) to 2006 (82 children, or 0.6% of the 13,606 children screened).

Chart 1. Percent of Children Screened for Lead with Elevated Blood Levels; Ohio's Largest Cities, 2001-2006



Statewide in 2006, about 2.1% of children screened were found to have elevated blood lead levels. Of Ohio's three largest cities, Columbus had the lowest rate of screened children with elevated blood lead levels at 0.8%. At 2.4%, the rate in Cincinnati was nearly equal to the state rate. Cleveland's rate of 9.0%, while significantly higher than Columbus's or Cincinnati's, nevertheless represents a dramatic decline from the city's 2001 rate of 18.9%.

About the Data

Data Sources:

- Ohio Department of Health, Ohio Childhood Lead Program (screening data for Franklin county and Ohio cities)

Definitions:

- **Elevated blood level:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines define elevated blood levels of lead as over 10 micrograms/deciliter (ug/dL).
- **Lead-based paint:** Paint used in homes prior to 1979, which over time can chip and crack, causing environmental contamination and health problems for residents

Explanations and Caveats:

- Franklin County children in families applying for Medicaid are required to have blood lead screening. In addition, the Ohio Department of Health recommends screening for children age 6 to 36 months of age living in high-risk zip codes with concentrations of low-income households or housing units built before 1950.
- Beginning in 1995, Ohio law requires that all laboratories doing blood lead screening in the state must report the test results, no matter what the level, to the Ohio Department of Health.
- The Ohio Department of Health reports that high lead exposure in children (≥ 80 ug/dL) can cause coma, convulsions, and death. Lower levels cause adverse effects in the central nervous system and kidneys. Blood levels as low as 10ug/dL, which do not cause distinctive symptoms, are associated with decreased intelligence, impaired neurobehavioral development, and decreased stature or slow growth.

Update Status:

September 2008