

# City of Plattsmouth

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Preliminary Findings of Rhylander Park Environmental Site Assessment Show Elevated Lead Levels

The City of Plattsmouth and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) recently completed a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) to determine the potential for subsurface environmental contamination at Rhylander Park in Plattsmouth.

More than 30 surface and subsurface soil samples were collected by NDEQ. Lead was detected by preliminary analysis in three surface soil samples at concentrations exceeding screening levels used to determine whether a site needs further investigation. For example, the U.S. EPA recommends a soil screening level of 400 milligrams of lead per kilogram of soil (mg/kg) in a residential setting.

Children 0-6 years of age and fetuses are the most susceptible to the negative effects of lead due to their developing nervous system. In addition, young children are more likely to play in dirt and to place their hands and other objects in their mouths, incidentally ingesting soil. Lead is also more readily absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract in children, and nutritional deficiencies, such as iron or calcium, may increase this absorption.

NDEQ is developing a work plan to conduct further testing. Such investigation will help Plattsmouth and NDEQ determine next steps. Meanwhile, Plattsmouth is working with officials of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to communicate with the public so that park users can take precautions.

## **Plattsmouth Rhylander Park Lead Toxicity and Precautions for Park Users**

The Department of Health and Human Services recommends:

1. All park users should be made aware of the presence of elevated metals found in park soils, in particular, lead. This should include notices to parents and coaches who use the park for softball, baseball and soccer. Children ages 0-6 and pregnant women are especially vulnerable.
2. Soccer, baseball, softball, bocce ball, and other athletes should wash their hands prior to eating snacks or other food items following games and practices.
3. Parents, athletes, and other park users are advised to remove any shoes, spikes, etc., that come into contact with bare soil, prior to entering their home. These shoes should remain outdoors or in a garage to avoid tracking soil into their home.
4. Parents, athletes, and other park users should launder all soiled clothing separately from other laundry.
5. Small children, 0-6 years of age and pregnant women should avoid contact with bare soil areas in the park.
6. Parents and park users who are concerned about exposure to park soil should contact their physician for additional information.

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## FACT SHEET

### Background

- The City of Plattsmouth and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) recently completed an assessment of park soil and more than 30 samples were collected.
- Lead was detected in 3 surface soil samples at concentrations exceeding levels used to determine whether a site needs further investigation.
- The U.S. EPA recommends further investigation in residential soil if the soil level exceeds 400 milligrams of lead per kilogram of soil.

### Lead Exposure

- Children 0-6 years of age and fetuses are the most susceptible to the negative effects of lead due to their developing nervous system.
- Young children are more likely to play in dirt and to place their hands and other objects in their mouths, incidentally ingesting soil and potential contaminants in soil.
- Lead is more readily absorbed from the gastrointestinal tract in children, and nutritional deficiencies, such as iron or calcium, may increase this absorption.

### DHHS Recommendations

- Soccer, baseball, softball, bocce ball, and other athletes should wash their hands prior to eating snacks or other food items following games and practices.
- Parents, athletes, and other park users are advised to remove any shoes, spikes, etc., that come into contact with bare soil, prior to entering their home. These shoes should remain outdoors or in a garage to avoid tracking soil into their home.
- Parents, athletes, and other park users should launder all soiled clothing separately from other laundry.
- Small children, 0-6 years of age and pregnant women should avoid contact with bare soil areas in the park.
- Parents and park users who are concerned about exposure to park soil should contact their physician for additional information.

### Next Steps

- NDEQ is developing on a work plan to do additional soil testing.
- Plattsmouth will continue to work with officials at the Department of Health and Human Services to communicate with the public so that park users can take the appropriate precautions.